

**Sixteenth sitting**

Tuesday 15 June 2004, 10.15 a.m.

*President: Mr. Ray Guevara, Mr. Attigbe***REPORTS OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE GOVERNING
BODY AND OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL: DISCUSSION
(CONCL.)***Original Spanish: THE PRESIDENT (Mr. GUEVARA)*

We shall now resume our discussion of the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing body and of the Director-General.

Original Spanish: Mr. ARTHUR ERRÁZURIZ (Employers' delegate, Chile)

I should like to begin by congratulating the President on his appointment to chair this assembly.

The International Labour Conference has been, and we hope it will continue to be, the best international forum for the exchange of ideas and experience with regard to the labour issues of concern to all of the parties involved.

It also provides the appropriate framework for the preparation of legal standards with a view to creating jobs and also with a view to ensuring fair, modern and humane relationships in the world of labour.

We are here to highlight the importance that should be given to setting standards largely with a view to boosting job creation thereby creating the best tool for defeating poverty which is, and continues to be, a most relevant subject for the majority of countries and of course for this Organization.

It is essential for us to pool our efforts to guarantee equal opportunities in access to employment, through the creation of new standards which will promote recruitment, combat unemployment and furthermore recognize and regulate the new forms of recruitment that have arisen in recent times as a result of the specialization of work, and which have created a new source of work for thousands of workers.

In this regard, it is particularly important to concentrate efforts on implementing standards that promote the recruitment of young people and women, who are sectors of the working population that require ongoing and serious encouragement so that they can become a stable labour force, rather than an unstable and precarious one, as is the case in many countries.

Labour standards, by their very nature, put all companies on an equal footing. However, the fact of the matter is that no two companies are the same. This ought to lead us to a conclusion on the pressing need to create flexible legal frameworks that would allow employers and workers collectively to adapt

the said standards to the specific reality of their enterprises.

In Chile, business organizations are trying to find ways to reach an understanding with workers' organizations. We should like to renew our appeal to those organizations, asking them to work together to modernize our labour systems, which is all the more necessary today given that our country has recently entered into free trade agreements with the United States, with the European community and with the Republic of Korea.

We are the only country in America to have achieved such progress, but we are aware that such progress brings with it an obligation to be more efficient and productive. These commitments will be of benefit to all only if we can reach the necessary agreements that will allow us to work in harmony and understanding with no obstacle to the analysis and application of new standards and concepts derived from globalization.

Likewise, we should like to appeal to our Government to renew its efforts to ensure that the social actors in the field of labour benefit from fair and impartial monitoring, which has not always been the case in recent times. All of this should help us to generate more and better jobs which is one of the permanent objectives of the ILO. These jobs should be found without any form of discrimination and should offer fair wages in accordance with the company's current situation. We should also like to highlight the pressing need to implement mechanisms that promote training, which is the most efficient and fastest way of ensuring the personal and professional development of workers. It is through training and by developing trust between workers and employers, in a climate of impartiality and authority, that will allow us to move forward and to achieve our goals.

Our country is proud to have created, at the beginning of the 1980s, a welfare system that has served as a model for many countries in Latin America and Eastern Europe. It is based on the investment of savings and the private management of those savings. This system is flexible, transparent and has demonstrated its effectiveness. It gives the participating workers the freedom to choose who manages their funds and the freedom to choose the type of pension and the way in which they invest their money. These systems have proved to be very successful, both in terms of the capacity of these pensions to offer much higher rates of return than the salary increases that were used to calculate pen-

sions under the pay-as-you-go system, and in terms of contributing to the savings and investment processes in our countries.

In Chile, the funds accumulated by workers have reached a figure of very similar to the gross domestic product.

Last October, the International Federation of Pension Fund Administrators, which I preside over, met in Geneva with ILO specialists in social security matters with a view to demonstrating the results which have been achieved in a system that now has 26 associated countries.

I would like to repeat once again, in conclusion, that Chilean business circles are always ready to cooperate in the implementation of the international standards of this Organization. We believe that, if the ILO had an extremely important function in the past, it is now even more important today, because economies no longer have borders. It does not seem fair that certain countries enjoy unfair comparative advantages over others because of unfair labour systems. Exploiting workers can not be turned into an advantage.

I conclude by congratulating the Director-General of the ILO for his comprehensive Report which addresses issues and concepts that, without a doubt, will help us to achieve the objectives that I have referred to.

Mr. AHMED (*Workers' delegate, Pakistan*)

On behalf of the Workers' delegation of Pakistan, I offer sincere congratulations to the President on his well-deserved election to preside over this historic session of Conference, as well as to the Vice-Presidents.

We also take this opportunity to convey our fraternal greetings and good wishes from the Workers of Pakistan to all the distinguished delegates.

Globalization of the economy and the deregulation of public services in many developing countries pose a serious challenge to the labour force through the shrinking of their employment opportunities and the failure to achieve the objective of developing decent work.

The trade union organizations in Pakistan are united in their aim of establishing one national platform to impress upon policy-makers and employers the need to devise national policies which will ensure meaningful education and training and productive and voluntary employment for all our young people, and defend and promote core workers' rights. We therefore urge the Government of Pakistan to fulfil its obligations under the ratified ILO core Conventions and restore fundamental trade union rights in all sectors, including the railways, P.I.A., KESK, E.P.Z. and others, and to amend the Industrial Relations Ordinance 2002, the Banking Companies Ordinance, section 27(b), the Civil Service Tribunal Act, section 2/A, and the Ordinance relating to the special presidential powers of removal from service, 2000.

The Government undertook to amend these laws at the Governing Body session held in March 2004 during the examination of Case No. 2229.

We are pleased to inform you that the workers' organizations have been endeavouring, with ACTRAV, to develop and promote the programme of poverty reduction and the decent work concept, and expects and urges the ILO to increase its technical assistance to Pakistan for capacity building of the social partners, particularly in workers' organi-

zations, to cope with the challenges posed by the globalization of the economy and free trade and deregulation and to safeguard and promote the interests of the workers.

On this occasion, we wish to commend the report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, which is headed by the Heads of the States of Finland and the United Republic of Tanzania. The report in question is accompanied by the Report of the Director-General entitled *A fair globalization: The role of the ILO*. We strongly support its recommendations, and also commend the work of the ILO under the dedicated leadership of Mr. Juan Somavia, the Director-General of the ILO and his team. The positive outcome of economic globalization cannot be achieved by most developing countries unless they are provided with a level playing field through the development of technology, provision of adequate resources, access to the markets of developed countries and debt relief. The Director-General of the ILO has himself acknowledged that ratio of the incomes of the richest and the poorest countries, which was 50 to 1 in 1960, is more than 120 to 1 today. According to some estimates, the richest 1 per cent of the world's people receive as much as the bottom 51 per cent. There are more than 1.3 billion people living below the poverty line, with an income of less than US\$1 day. More than 2.3 billion people are either unemployed or underemployed and lack any form of social security.

The other day, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, when addressing UNCTAD Conference, said that the world today is a more unequal place than it was 40 years ago. The ILO is rightly expected to play a leading role with other international agencies, such as the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO, to safeguard the social dimension of globalization and to defend and promote the rights of the masses, since experience has demonstrated that IMF and World Bank policies imposed upon the developing countries have resulted in rising unemployment and mass poverty, not its reduction. The free flow of capital should be accompanied by controlled international labour migration.

We also strongly support the resolution concerning the strengthening of the role of the ILO in supporting workers and employers in Palestine and the other occupied Arab territories which could not be discussed owing to the lack of time.

We welcome the Report of the Director-General on the situation of Arab workers of the occupied Arab territories, which has highlighted the continuous economic and social suffering and the denial of basic trade union rights under foreign occupation. We call upon the ILO and the international community to extend all possible help to free workers in those territories from foreign occupation in accordance with United Nations resolutions, and we will extend our full support to poverty alleviation measures and efforts to raise employment and enhance respect for their fundamental workers' rights.

We can convey the deep appreciation of the work done by ACTRAV, and appeal to the Director-General to involve ACTRAV in all the ILO InFocus programmes with a view to raising the capacity of workers' organizations in the fields of employment, international labour standards, social protection and social dialogue. We commend the work done by the ILO Asian Pacific Regional Office and urge the

ILO to consider providing more resources for the country programme to make the ILO more visible.

We would like to express our highest admiration for the contribution of the international Workers' group, led by Brother Roy Trotman's team and Brother Dan Cunniah, secretary of the group. I wish to thank the group for honouring my country by electing me as its Vice-Chairperson.

We hope that the deliberations of this historic session of the Conference under the President's leadership will pave the way for the promotion of social justice, peace, human dignity and a better quality of life for the masses all over the world.

Original Spanish: Mr. GUTIÉRREZ MADUEÑO (Workers' delegate, Peru)

Allow me to convey to the President and to the international community of the ILO, the respectful greetings of the Peruvian Workers and, at the same time, urge the International Labour Organization to devote itself with renewed vigour to its mission to protect and promote the rights and working conditions of the workers of the world.

In this regard, we would like to express our support for the focal points raised by the Director-General of the International Labour Organization in his Report submitted to the 92nd Session of the International Labour Conference on the promotion and the application of standards, fundamental principles and rights at work and the creation of decent work.

On the other hand, we wish to inform you that in Peru, despite the efforts made to promote the labour rights of workers, these are not being reflected by the democratic Government, which, far from taking measures along these lines, is trying to make industrial relations even more flexible to the detriment of workers' rights, supposedly to attract investors.

It is our obligation to inform this international forum that there has been no legislative progress enabling us to reverse the violations experienced by workers during the dictatorial and authoritarian decade of Fujimori. The main problem lies in the fact that the Government does not have a clear-cut and consistent labour policy, and is not taking the necessary decisions to solve the problems of the workers, who today are expecting to have their labour rights restored.

Many regional conflicts extend throughout the country. The difficulties of the political system in creating a list of complaints which can be listened to and acted on by the State, as well as the inability of the Government to present real alternatives to social requirements, threatens the fragile democracy which exists in Peru.

The Government already, seriously discredited, is becoming more and more unsustainable. However, it persists with its failed economic and social policy which the people reject, listening more to the dictates of the IMF than the requests of the Peruvian people. Thus, whilst constantly maintaining the privileges of multinationals and the payment of foreign debts, they are not finding a solution to the demands of workers, agricultural producers, the regions or the excluded people of Peru. This is the root of the contradiction between the relative economic growth which the country is experiencing, and falling real wages, increasing poverty and unemployment, and a deterioration in the basic services of education, health, nutrition, etc. Consequently, we are faced with an economic policy

which only benefits a few, whilst it excludes the majority and denies them the benefits of economic growth, prompting them with good reason to rise up against this system of inequity.

But this is not all. Representative democracy is also in crisis, and the political institutionality, which Fujimori established in his spurious 1993 Constitution and which the current Government has not been able to derogate, is, in fact, creating even more retrograde reforms such as those which eliminate the rights acquired and freeze the pensions of the unemployed and retirees.

The Congress of the Republic, the judicial authority and the parties are also involved in the crisis of the political system which our country is experiencing. Therefore, we, the workers, are requesting, *inter alia*, a new Constitution laying the foundations for a new Republic.

Finally, the country is facing a serious moral crisis which affects the whole body of society, imperilling its own viability. Those involved in the Fujimori mafia continue operating in their own political interests while the controlling classes are seeking to prevent any kind of sanction against those who are responsible. The country will not tolerate the application, as always, of a "clean-slate" policy.

The current Government, far from embodying the moral will of the country, is involved in acts of corruption, nepotism and extravagant spending, even influencing some of its members to maintain relationships and agreements with the mafia supporters of Fujimori.

In a nutshell, we are not just faced with a political crisis as some people maintain, but also an economic and moral crisis, the solution to which will necessarily involve dealing with these factors.

We request, from the international community, the necessary support so that violations in our country of those human rights which the ILO rightly views as fundamental can cease.

Original Spanish: Mr. GONZÁLEZ GAITÁN (Workers' delegate, Nicaragua)

May I first express our satisfaction before the Workers of this Conference. We are sure that under the President's leadership we will achieve the desired results.

Next, I wish to convey to the distinguished delegates at this meeting, the fraternal greetings of Nicaraguan workers, particularly their trade union leaders, who are united in the daily fight to defend the rights won by the workers of my country.

This Conference, as can be seen from the Report submitted by the Director-General of the ILO, is taking place against a backdrop of dramatic situations where the neo-liberal policies and structural adjustments imposed by the international financial bodies are constantly threatening to turn the standards protecting workers' fundamental rights throughout the world into mere declarations. Perhaps never before have the daily realities experienced by millions of human beings contrasted so radically with the declaration made by the formal democracies of our countries with respect to the historical rights won through the basic Conventions of the ILO.

We can say, today, that violation of the freedom of association, the loss of rights acquired through collective bargaining, the resurgence of labour repression in free zones, job insecurity in the civil and public services. The oppression and abuse of immi-

grant workers, the pitiless exploitation of child labour and violence against rural trade unions are still a daily reality for the workers of the world. In this context, appeals for social dialogue and tripartite approaches to labour problems are window-dressing to disguise real state policies upholding employers' interests policies which, on the one hand, welcome any formal initiatives but, on the other hand, show total lack of respect for workers' fundamental labour rights and go as far as penalizing the social action of the workers by wrongly accusing them of crimes.

The Report of the Director-General is full of examples which paint a very sorry picture of respect for the fundamental rights of the workers throughout the world, where millions of human beings are subjected to conditions of extreme poverty and misery and even worse, to the generalized threat of an immoral war imposed by the military and economic powers of the world.

The victims of this situation, who include the workers of my country, make great sacrifices due to the conditions imposed by the international financial bodies with the complicity of the Government of Nicaragua which should act on behalf of its people and its nation, whereas it actually represents interests that have absolutely nothing to do with our needs. The signing of the free trade agreement between the Governments of Central America and the United States, with all the risks and disadvantages that it entails for our economies and for our labour and social rights, is clear proof and an example of this submissive attitude on the part of the Nicaraguan authorities.

Today, Nicaraguan workers are tormented by the deep-seated institutionalized corruption of recent governments, by massive unemployment of over 50 per cent, trade union repression in the free zones, above all, against women workers, constant job insecurity in the civil and public services, the fragile nature of collective agreements because of pressure and the dilemma of how to face up to blackmail and the need for great flexibility in order to provide a more propitious climate for foreign investments that curb labour rights, by the indiscriminate privatization of the basic services that used to be state-run by budgetary cuts in the field of health and education and by a weakening of the minimum wages established in a pact between the Government and employers, thus violating the ILO Minimum Wage Fixing Convention, 1970 (No. 131), and lastly by the economic and moral harm caused by current government policy now which awards mega salaries to public officials, headed by the President of the Republic and mega pensions and other economic perks which are a public affront given the extreme poverty and misery against which the Nicaraguan people are struggling. This is what neo-liberalism has done to my country into and the pact between the international financial bodies and the Government is responsible for it.

In conclusion, from this world podium of labour, on behalf of Nicaraguan Workers, we denounce this situation and demand a real and speedy restitution of the fundamental rights, recognized by the ILO and to this end, we request that this honourable Organization do more to follow up and monitor these rights.

Together with all the workers of the world, we reaffirm our confidence in a better future and our firm will to continue fighting for peace, decent jobs and

employment with stronger trade unions united in the quest for fairer societies.

Mr. AUNG (*Employers' delegate, Myanmar*)

First of all, I would like to join the previous speakers in congratulating the President on his unanimous election as President of the 92nd Session of the International Labour Conference.

Globalization has brought about many changes, such as the promotion of open societies, open economies and free exchange of goods, ideas and knowledge. However, the economic problems of the world, especially those of the developing countries, are far from resolved. The simple and legitimate aspiration of the vast majority to have better job opportunities is still far from realization.

My delegation is of the view that in order to solve these problems, employment creation should be one of the first economic priorities, for without employment the goals of a decent living standard and social and economic development will remain ever illusive.

We are greatly concerned to learn that global unemployment has exceeded 185 million people, which is considered to be the highest unemployment figure ever recorded. Unemployment problems have given rise to international migration. Good domestic employment policies, on the other hand, can help resolve the problem of migration. We welcome the initiative taken by the Director-General to discuss the pressing question of migrant workers at this year's International Labour Conference.

In Myanmar, due to a change from a centralized economy to a market-oriented economy, the private sector has grown with increasing momentum, though somewhat stifled by the sanctions imposed on us.

The Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI), which I have the honour to represent, is fully in favour of promoting employment growth. In Myanmar, many industrial zones have been established for the development and modernization of the country and due to the emergence of new industries, many job opportunities have been created.

We have also ventured into the human resources development sector. The establishment of an information and communication technology park has enhanced knowledge and skills and enabled entrepreneurs to make progress in gaining access to emerging technological resources.

We are also promoting opportunities for women to obtain decent and productive work. The Myanmar Women's Entrepreneur Association last year hosted the Tenth Global Conference of Women Entrepreneurs in Yangon, at which women's entrepreneurs' organizations from the region actively participated.

Being a developing country, special focus is given to the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises, and we look forward to working closely with similar enterprises from countries within the region to better respond to the contemporary challenges of globalization.

Since successful enterprises are at the heart of the creation of employment and improvement of living standards, employers' organizations are crucial, and sustainable enterprises can contribute to economic and social development. As the representative of the Employers' group in Myanmar, we are supportive

of the ILO Global Employment Agenda for it not only aims at reversing mounting unemployment and poverty, but also promoting trade, technology and entrepreneurship.

In Myanmar the historic National Convention has been reconvened since 17 May 2004 to draft a new domestic State Constitution. This is the first step of the seven-step road map announced by the Prime Minister in August 2003. Important and far-reaching developments are taking place at the National Convention. At the meeting of the National Convention on 20 May 2004 basic principles concerning the duties of employers and employees and labour organizations were laid down for discussion so that these principles can be incorporated into the new draft Constitution.

We are hopeful that the necessary provisions to promote the welfare and the rights of employers and employees will be duly reflected in the new State Constitution.

Original French: Mr. CORTEBEECK (Workers' delegate, Belgium)

I would like to use this opportunity both to welcome and to offer comments on the report, *A fair globalization: Creating opportunities for all*, by the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization.

We welcome this report because it is full, exhaustive, critical and well-balanced. It recognizes several ways in which globalization is dysfunctional and concentrates on the social challenges it presents. It is the fruit of the reflections of 26 people from very different backgrounds. That is a positive thing in itself. It stresses the need to harmonize the policies we implement at various different levels, be it national, continental or international, and it takes up the proposal of the World Confederation of Labour, among others, to set up an economic and social security council within the United Nations. It points the finger at the tariff and agricultural policies of rich countries and it pleads for more public development aid. It also recommends a more effective voting system to better represent developing countries.

But the main thing is its central theme, the need to tackle the social consequences of globalization, a subject which can never be stressed too often. We would have liked this report to go even further on certain points such as with regard to the debts of poor countries where the report suggests a restructuring rather than cancellation. Then on trade, the report wishes to get rid of unfair barriers to access to markets, but it does not criticize the WTO's decision-making system. Again, on trade, the report does not provide for a formal structure for negotiations between the ILO and the WTO to deal with the relationship between trade and the fundamental standards to be applied in the world of work. In the same way, there is no provision for any formal structure for dialogue between the Bretton Woods institutions and the WTO, on the one hand, and the trade union movement and other forces in civil society, on the other.

But, at this stage, the challenge is not so much to do with analysis of the report. The challenge is to follow up the initiatives it proposes, for instance, assessing the impact of international policies, establishing an international instrument to guarantee harmonization of these policies and, within the United Nations system, setting up an economic and

social security council, establishing a world forum for migration and broadening social dialogue to free trade zones and worldwide systems of production.

Globally speaking, the international community should strive for decent work, full employment and better working conditions. Today, we do have international monitoring of countries to see that they conform to international macroeconomic and financial standards. While these indicators are being monitored all the time there are macro-social indicators, like employment rates, salary levels and income disparities, which are to all intents and purposes ignored.

If we target employment and unemployment rates more closely, that will force us have an employment policy, and if we provide for assessments of the social impacts of policies, that will force us into providing measures to limit these negative impacts. That is what a fairer globalization is about.

Ms. MUGANZA (Government delegate, Rwanda)

It is an honour and a pleasure, on behalf of the Rwandan delegation, to join the previous speakers in congratulating the President and the Vice-Presidents upon their election to the leadership of the present session of the Conference.

My congratulations also go to the ILO, and in particular, the Director-General, Mr. Juan Somavia for the high-quality Report presented.

The Government of Rwanda supports the ILO's action throughout the world and particularly in Africa, where its activities during the recent years have focused on poverty reduction, the prevention of HIV/AIDS in the workplace, reconstruction after crisis, social dialogue and socio-economic policies, and regional integration.

In this context, the Government of Rwanda would like the ILO's intervention to increase because Africa remains the poorest and the most marginalized continent. Particular attention should be given to countries that are getting out of conflict, with viable plans to reduce poverty through decent work and good governance.

Poverty breeds insecurity, which infringes upon the creation of a conducive environment and employment. Poverty favours the spread of pandemics such as HIV/AIDS which is very threatening to development.

To fight against poverty, Rwanda has developed national poverty reduction strategies and a development vision towards the year 2020.

Rwanda aims at increasing production in agriculture, human resources and institutional capacity, promotion of gender equity, intensive public works, decentralization, good governance and macroeconomic stability.

The current pattern of globalization does not prevent the increase of unemployment and poverty in developing countries. For those countries it seems unfair because it does not allow them access to the developed countries' markets within favourable conditions.

Moreover, new enterprises cannot compete with the big transnational enterprises or subsidized agricultural products on their own markets. In this context, the globalization process does not give the weakest countries a chance to create jobs.

In this regard, I praise the ILO's initiative of establishing the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization. The current discussion on the future of globalization, as reflected in the

Commission's report, entails better perspectives for it to be open and favourable to all, especially the poorer nations.

The discussion on the Global Report under the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work provides an opportunity to emphasize that both the Rwandan Constitution and the Labour Code enshrine freedom of association and collective bargaining.

My country reaffirms its commitment to implementing the ILO fundamental principles; a commitment made to our people in the national principles of good governance and promotion of human rights.

Human resources are a key element of the agenda at this session of the Conference, and I would like to underscore that the Government of Rwanda knows that all citizens are the fundamental resources of the country and rank first in our 20-year development vision.

In this regard, access to education, training and career development is one of the paths foreseen to reinforce the implementation capacity of our human resources.

Concerning international migration, which is still an uncontrollable phenomenon, particularly in developing countries without data and control of irregular migration, has a considerable dimension and poses serious difficulties in the country of origin as well as in the host countries.

Finally, we hope that the discussions on this issue will result in innovative solutions to the migration of labour force which will increase global productivity and put an end to exploitation.

In conclusion, I am confident that our Conference will contribute to the construction of a world of freedom, solidarity, unity and peace.

Mr. BARAK (*Employers' adviser and substitute delegate, Israel*)

Allow me, even at this late stage, to take this opportunity to congratulate the President and Vice-Presidents on their election to preside over this session of the International Labour Conference and on their excellent leadership in the difficult task of conducting the deliberations of this Conference.

Since the social aspects of globalization is the main theme of this session of the Conference, may I open my statement by congratulating the Director-General on his Report, *A fair globalization: The role of the ILO*, on the implications for the ILO of the report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization.

While, from the viewpoint of Employers, we may have some reservations about some features in the report of the World Commission, I think that there is a general understanding that, since globalization has an important role in economic development and therefore in the consideration of employment, it also opens new major opportunities for social development. This is an area in which the ILO, together with its constituents and through its local and regional network, can and should intensify its efforts.

For this task, the ILO should harness its tripartite structure, which provides it with unique capabilities emerging from the potential strength of the social partners that are the backbone of the Organization.

The year 2004 could be a turning point for the Israeli economy. At the end of 2003, the number of employees in industry remained stable for the first time in three years and an increase in industrial production of 2.7 per cent was registered. Furthermore,

emerging background conditions seem to support that direction, among them the expected acceleration in global trade, especially in the high-tech areas, alongside positive local factors such as direct and indirect tax reductions, together with a possible increase in wages during 2004, which may result in an increase in private consumption, while public consumption is expected to remain unchanged.

In view of these predictions for the expected growth of the Israeli economy, we as Employers are concerned about the unsettled present situation of labour relations in Israel. The last few years have manifested the outburst of strikes in the public sector which have adversely affected the private sector, especially as regards shipping and transportation of goods and products.

In these circumstances, the Government saw fit to introduce a bill amending the settlement of labour disputes act in order to regulate in a more coherent way, the rules of behaviour governing labour disputes in the public sector, especially concerning essential public services, such as transportation, ports and shipping, health services, state administration, municipal administration, etc.

The main changes to the existing legislation proposed by the Government are: first, to lengthen the cooling-off period of 15 days before declaring a strike to 30 days in the public sector, during which time mediation steps could be taken to settle the dispute; secondly, the strike will be considered legal only if a majority of the workers involved in the strike had agreed to it by a vote in a secret ballot.

The ideas behind these proposals exist in many industrialized countries and although trade unions in Israel object to these proposals, we think that they may be considered as a fair basis for labour dispute management, especially when essential public services are involved.

Another topic that currently occupies the labour relations actors in Israel is the nomination by the Minister of Justice of a distinguished committee, headed by a former judge of the Israeli Supreme Court, to examine the status of the labour courts system in Israel in relation to the general judicial system. Some people think that the labour courts should be integrated within the overall judicial system of Israel, but our position is that the labour courts should retain their present status as a unique judicial system separate from their overall court system of Israel, thus retaining the special status within the Israeli labour relations arena, while some procedural changes may be considered to increase the efficiency and capacity of the courts.

A few speakers, during the debate, decided to deal with the current conflict in the Middle East, especially with the Palestinian issue. In this regard, I would like to make a few remarks.

I would like to quote from the Report of the Director-General on *The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories*: "a higher degree of conflict leads to a lower level of economic activity, which in turn translates into a higher rate of unemployment." Had the Palestinian leadership not embarked on a three-and-a-half year campaign of violence, both parties would not have faced the current difficulties – economic activity would have increased and Palestinian and Israeli unemployment would have been checked.

For example, the Palestinians have done their utmost by terrorist attacks to disrupt the work in the joint industrial area of Erez, which is the expression

of hope for economic cooperation and joint ownership between Israelis and Palestinians. The same has happened in the Karni passage where goods are transported.

In conclusion, I would like to quote again from the Director-General's, Report: "A solution can only be found as part of negotiations and dialogue."

Mr. BENYDIN (*Workers' delegate, Mauritius*)

Permit me, in the first instance, to congratulate the President and the Officers of the Conference on their election to conduct the deliberations of this present session. With the growing pace of globalization and the accelerated changes in technology and new work methods, the challenges posed to trade unions and workers are no doubt increasing. In addition to our fundamental functions and roles of protecting and defending the inalienable rights of workers, trade unions have to act as a watchdog and a countervailing force struggling against the adverse effects of globalization and to direct it in the mainstreams of social justice and human values which provide for dignity of workers and decent work. And, above all, to pay due respects to our essential needs such as food, health, education, housing and a safe environment.

We would like also to promote good governance, which encourages more workers' participation and which ensures accountability, transparency and the rule of law. Globalization in all its forms should also address the pressing problems of unemployment, underemployment and the marginalization of vulnerable groups and, in particularly, poverty. Globalization should in no way be allowed to continue as it is now, that is increasing assets for the rich and the powerful at the expense of the least developed and developing countries. It is regrettable to note that neo-liberal policies within the context of the globalized economy are having more and more adverse impacts on workers' rights and society in general, particularly on the implementation of policies involving privatization of essential services such as telecommunications, water, electricity and transport. Other factors, such as outsourcing, contracting out, deregulation and flexibility are also causes of discontent and deep concern to the workers and trade unions; the more so in the various cases where labour standards and labour legislation are not complied with.

It is comforting to witness the campaign launched by the ILO a number of years ago now, in favour of the dignity of workers and decent jobs involving a living wage to allow workers to meet the basic needs of their families. Indeed the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up, adopted in 1998, expresses in unequivocal terms that all member States have an obligation "to respect, to promote and to realize workers' rights ... the principles concerning the fundamental rights which are the subject of those Conventions namely: freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour, the effective abolition of child labour, and the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation".

In Mauritius, following repeated representations made by the trade union organizations, we are now patiently looking forward to the ratification of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87). It should

also be stressed that the Mauritian Government has undertaken to come forward with new legislation to replace the existing IRA in force since 1973, which has always been a source of major discontent and rejection by the trade unions. All the trade union federations in Mauritius have joined hands to propose a common document in this endeavour so that we can have, in the near future, a new legal framework for industrial relations which is in harmony with the principles of democratic labour legislation. With the new legislation, the trade union movement hopes that constraints and obstacles on the right to strike will be removed and that collective bargaining will be reshaped and redefined. The workers in Mauritius are also expecting major changes with respect of the mechanism for the settling of industrial disputes without undue delay, and the consolidation of tripartism and promotion of social dialogue.

Social security and protection are considered by the United Nations as a social right and it is regrettable that only a small percentage of workers are enjoying the benefit thereof. It is therefore imperative that private companies and enterprises should develop corporate social responsibility, including effective and real social dialogue with trade unions, and have policies which underpin social benefits to improve workers' status, welfare and well-being. Also of great concern to us is the persistence of socio-economic insecurity and especially the exposure of workers to poor conditions of occupational health and safety. Social policies should be adopted by enterprises to address the issue of HIV/AIDS, which is increasing poverty and fuelling a secondary pandemic of orphans, thus transforming our present society into a less secure one. We therefore require urgently policies geared at consolidating regulations in favour of occupational health and safety at work.

As representatives of trade union organizations whose policies are deeply anchored with workers' rights, we cannot also remain indifferent to the plight and difficulties of foreign workers in the export processing zone. We are disturbed to a great extent that discrimination and exploitation in most countries where migrant workers are affected are on the increase, particularly factors concerning underpayment, poor working conditions, caused mostly by the non-application of the Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97), and the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143). We strongly consider that one of the most effective ways to combat exploitation of migrant workers is to allow them to exercise their right to trade union membership in conjugation with the prescriptions of Conventions Nos. 87 and 98 of the ILO. Migrant workers should also have the rights to payment of insurance, pensions and the right to family reunification.

In Mauritius, the trade union movement is not remaining inactive and indifferent to the difficulties and problems of migrant workers. We are looking forward, with the support and technical assistance of the ILO, to setting up specialized units within our trade union's structure with a view to better defend the rights of migrant workers and ensure their protection at all times and in all circumstances.

Finally, I surely wish that the deliberations and conclusions of this session of the Conference will contribute further to improving living standards

worldwide and meeting the objectives for a better world and social justice.

Ms. DEJANOVIĆ (*Workers' adviser and substitute delegate, Croatia*)

It is a great honour for me to be the spokesperson of the Croatian workers at this distinguished gathering. Being one of the few female speakers, I extend my appreciation to ILO's contribution to gender mainstreaming worldwide.

The ILO stands for social justice, decent work and humane globalization. And yet, core labour standards are violated far too often by far too many. Denial of freedom of association, denial of the right to organize in order to protect fundamental labour rights and dignity of workers, remain highly problematic. Organizing migrant workers and workers in the informal economy remains a major challenge.

I wish to thank the Director-General for focusing the world's attention on the social dimension of globalization.

More than ever before, there are contradictory views on how globalization affects the national economies of small countries like Croatia and the daily lives of its workers.

Fourteen years of transition marked by poorly and unsystematically managed privatization and restructuring have generated negative feelings towards globalization and its potential to create employment and wealth.

In view of Croatia's strategic goal to join the European Union, a high-level tripartite consensus between social partners and government is required to support policies for developing and upgrading our national capabilities to use globalization the best we can.

Sustained creation of more and progressively better employment can only be achieved in the context of high and stable economic growth. The Croatian Government's financial arrangements with the IMF and the World Bank do not always support those goals, which makes our task tremendously difficult. International financial institutions deal primarily with issues of fiscal discipline, international liquidity of the State and structural adjustment, not taking into account national priorities such as real growth and the creation of quality employment.

In reference to the report of the World Commission, we support by all means the idea of coordinated debates on different aspects of globalization. We wish our voice to be heard at those international forums.

For small countries like Croatia, policy dialogue and focus group forums are good platforms for discussing the issue of coping with global production and investment structures, not being restricted to negative scenarios.

There is a need to review national policies in areas like human resources development, providing better access to education and skills to empower people to benefit from globalization employment patterns. We need an active labour market policy and an integrated social policy to assist people who cannot cope with open market forces.

The message that "social progress cannot be achieved by social policies" is in many aspects a central message of the report and a challenge for the unions. What should be recognized at this unique moment in time is that topics of coherence between trade, investment, financial and social policies are

becoming trade union topics. Trade unions are legitimate to deal with those issues.

Finally, we welcome the ILO's mission to make globalization more of a "win-win" game and a less severe environment for the fulfilment of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

In our attempt to influence national policy choices, to minimize the damage and to maximize the benefits for the workers, we would appreciate as much help as possible from the ILO and generally from the redesigned Bretton Woods architecture.

In order to achieve the goal of fair globalization and decent work for all, the ILO mandate should be further encouraged, supported and strengthened.

(*Mr. Attigbe takes the Chair.*)

Mr. DEVENDRA (*Workers' delegate, Sri Lanka*)

Please allow me at the outset to congratulate the President on his election and wish him every success in guiding the work of this Conference to fruitful conclusions at this session. I also wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the two Vice-Presidents of the Conference on their election.

This year, the Conference is due to discuss three items which are of special interest to our country and its workers. The subject of work in the fishing sector is of special concern to us: Sri Lanka being an island, fishing is the livelihood of the vast majority of people living in coastal areas. We have nearly 200,000 workers working abroad, and remittances from these migrant workers constitute the largest foreign exchange earner for our country. Both these sectors are unorganized and are not covered by the labour laws of the country, which make workers in these sectors very vulnerable to dangers and insecurity associated with their employment. Therefore, our Workers' delegation will be actively participating in the work of the Committee on the fishing sector and the Committee on migrant workers.

Permit me to place before this assembly the current phase of events in my country, which have a direct bearing on the democratic freedoms and living standards of our people. As is well known, my country is beset with problems arising from the rebellion in the north and east of the country. The previous Government, which left office in April this year, signed a cease-fire agreement with the Tamil militants, and this agreement continues to be in force to date under the new Government which has pledged to continue with the peace process facilitated by the Royal Norwegian Government. The slow pace of progress in negotiations has placed a strain on all those who yearn for a negotiated political settlement to the ethnic problems of my country.

Sri Lanka, as you know, depends much on its exports, and the garment industry occupies a central place in its export-oriented economic activity. Governments of many developing countries are becoming concerned by the uncertainty of their garment industries surviving beyond 2005, when the quota system will come to an end. As a country that has ratified all eight core Conventions of the ILO, Sri Lanka is fortunate to the extent that the European Union, after due inquiry, has granted an additional duty reduction on the present Generalized System of Preferences (GSP). We take pride in the fact that our country has become the first to succeed in obtaining concessions from the European Union on labour compliance.

Whilst our labour laws are generally in consort with internationally accepted human rights and labour rights norms, they have come under attack in the recent past owing to the pressures of international financial institutions and local businesses to make the labour market flexible, supposedly to create an environment conducive to employment creation. Trade unions have found themselves at variance with this policy as it seeks to promote exploitation of workers and insecurity of their employment. The present Freedom Alliance Government has pledged itself to bringing necessary relief to workers in this regard.

I take this opportunity to make special mention of the work performed by the ILO's Regional Offices on labour-related issues. The ILO Colombo Office, led by its dynamic Director, has to be commended for its enthusiasm and commitment in interacting with all the stakeholders in promoting the Decent Work Agenda. However, an area in which we have not yet made much headway is with regard to the effective implementation of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), with successive governments in our country adopting an ambiguous attitude on the need to enforce the relevant Conventions both in law and in practice.

Finally, as a Workers' delegate representing a country that was the first in the South Asian region to liberalize its economy, I have to state that the expected benefits from the transformation have failed to trickle down to the people, and this has led to a strong movement building up in our part of the world against unconditional submission to the conditionalities of international financial institutions. This situation needs to be treated in such a manner as to bring about development with equity.

Mr. LAMBERT (*Employers' delegate, United Kingdom*)

Globalization is a reality. It is all around us and it is unavoidable. The issue is not whether globalization is a good or bad thing in itself but understanding how it can be made to work for all. The Global Report helps us to do this.

The Report takes us forward by refusing to accept the common argument that the advantages of globalization for one group or one part of the world would always be to the detriment of another. Globalization has win-win potential for all. Globalization brings world publicized benefits for business: access to new customers and markets, best practice transfer, and economies of scale, among others. Yet if managed correctly, its benefits extend much wider than this. If it is conducted on a level playing field, trade between different countries and parts of the world facilitates poverty reduction, increases investment and results in economic growth.

Globalization can be good for workers, as firms standardize welfare and working conditions in order to retain staff and preserve the company's image in an increasingly competitive global market; it can also create the essential opportunity for the young to gain employment and to develop into excellent employees for the future.

Globalization can also be good for customers and consumers; they have enhanced power to make economic choices and benefit from the lower prices brought about by global production methods.

The Global Report correctly identifies the potential benefits of globalization. Correctly, it also stresses the necessity of taking steps to ensure that the benefits and opportunities afforded by globalization can be experienced by us all. If one were to identify two fundamental principles on which this Report is built, these would be fairness and effectiveness. The Report stresses the need for fairness and effectiveness in global governance, and also emphasizes the need to ensure that results of international decision-making are fair and effective for all countries concerned. It is because these principles are so important that it is vital we have a structure capable of ensuring they are translated into action. We must be clear about the role of the ILO in achieving this. The ILO must be clear and focused about what it will deliver.

The World Commission report is addressed to a variety of social, economic and governmental actors. The role of the ILO is the promotion of decent employment opportunities and social justice. The World Commission report should not be seen as an opportunity for the ILO to enlarge its mandate to the extent that it interferes with or duplicates the work of other organizations. Its primary focus in helping deliver the goals of the report should be on promoting the creation of employment, looking particularly at SME activities. It will be important to look at existing initiatives, particularly the work of other international agencies. Equally, the ILO must pay close attention to initiatives it has itself instigated, using existing tools where possible rather than inventing new ones.

Universally applicable ideals, discussed in forums such as these, gain substance only when translated into workable ideals at the appropriate level, and the Global Report recognizes this. For this reason there can be no "one-size-fits-all" approach. Different countries have different capacities, and will take varying amounts of time to ratify Conventions. The ILO's role is not to try to direct or control local dialogues, but to work with national or regional organizations to help them communicate with their governments.

In this intervention I have discussed globalization on a global scale, but in my final comments I want to be more specific about what must happen in this Organization if we are going to meet the great challenge that confronts us.

The ILO should be a beacon of best practice; the ILO must lead by example. It employs large numbers of people around the world, people who are at the leading edge of working for a better world. However, this group of employees will only be truly effective if they are themselves empowered; they must be free to contribute ideas that will be listened to and freely debated. Great organizations are distinguished by the quality of their management, and this Organization will become greater if it continues to generate and adopt these types of human resources policies. Only if this happens can the ILO attract the excellent people it needs to be an effective world-class Organization capable of driving change. Next, there must be further internal reform; in particular, reform of the Governing Body, and reform of this Conference itself, will also be crucial to ensuring that the ILO continues to be effective and relevant.

The significant impact of "a fair globalization" should be the hope that it gives to people everywhere, that real change is possible. Consider what

this could mean; more and more people achieving employment, a better standard of living for all and, most of all, the great stain of poverty being progressively eliminated. It is up to us all to ensure that the correct framework is in place to achieve these vital objectives.

Mr. LEWIS (*Employers' delegate, Jamaica*)

I consider it an honour to address this Conference. Like others, I too offer my congratulations to the President on his election.

No one can deny that the ILO, through its various efforts, has made a positive difference to the world over the past 85 years, but in the light of global changes it faces tremendous challenges each new day. The question is, can the ILO meet those challenges? The answer is undoubtedly a resounding "yes". With the able leadership and foresight of our Director-General, and the cooperation and commitment of all its Members, I am confident that this Organization will rise to any new challenge. Mankind thrives on challenges. Sometimes inventions and discoveries are the result of passion and the search for perfection; in other cases they are the desire to make the world a safer, more peaceful, more comfortable and a more just place for all peoples to live. It is this search for fairness which has informed the World Commission's report, *A fair globalization: Creating opportunities for all*.

If we are to achieve a fair globalization with any hope of creating opportunities for all, there are certain critical areas which must be addressed with passion.

Every nation must put people at the centre of every plan it makes. No economic plan is worthy of discussion if its ultimate goal is not to achieve meaningful benefits for the people, and chief of the benefits is the provision of decent work. In this respect it must be national governments' responsibility to create the right environment which is conducive to investment, which will grow their economies and create decent jobs. Such environments must include opportunities for education and training as a means of strengthening societies' human capital. Ultimately, this will lead to greater efficiency and increased productivity of goods and services; and when I speak of decent work I also mean that efforts must be made to eliminate child labour, because it cannot be right for children to miss the opportunity of education and training at an early age due to this unreasonable practice of engaging them in child labour.

My second point is that fair globalization must, of necessity, ensure fair rules of trade and fair rules of investment. It is impossible to speak of fair globalization if unfair rules of trade and investment continue to be road blocks to economic opportunities for developing countries.

Fair rules hold benefits not only for developing countries but also positive benefits for developed countries as well. Surely, if there is improved prosperity as a result of market expansion of goods and services of necessity, this also means benefits for poor developing countries. It also means the creation of jobs, the reduction of unemployment, poverty eradication, the reduction of crime and, most importantly, political stability.

The world is now seen as a global village. Space and language no longer separate the world. The vicissitudes of war, poverty and unemployment have resulted in mass international migration. This phe-

nomenon has brought with it concerns in relation to brain drain, which has implications for poor developing countries. We all have an appreciation of what these implications are.

Then, there is the runaway train: I refer to HIV/AIDS. It is estimated that there are over 40 million people living with HIV/AIDS. It is also estimated that nine out of ten are adults at their productive best. The need is now never greater for all three partners – governments, employers and workers – to promote and guide effective action, in the workplace and elsewhere, if we are to contain the spread of this disease.

It is not possible to wish ourselves out of poverty: there is only one way out of poverty, and that is to work ourselves out of it. In order to do this, we have to start at the national level, to work as a team. We must recognize that we have a stake in our nation's well-being. I believe that, collectively, we can make a difference. Divisiveness cannot work. There must be a search for balance so as to ensure peace, harmony, equity and justice in order to create opportunities for our peoples.

Fair globalization, in the final analysis, will only come if there are the following: responsible governance at the national level to influence international governance; ethical business principles and practices which are critical to efficiency and productivity; and social justice.

These same principles are applicable to organizations such as the World Bank and the IMF, and the ILO, as the international standard-setter, must have a role to play in its dialogue with these institutions.

We, the tripartite group of governments, employers and workers, representing countries from all over the world, know what needs to be done. The ILO is doing its part, and we are grateful. We have the capacity to do our part; we seem to lack the will to do it. In the interest of our peoples and a better world, let us do what we know is right, noble and just.

Original Arabic: Mr. MATTAR (*Employers' delegate, United Arab Emirates*)

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate!

The Federation of UAE Chambers of Commerce and Industry has been participating in the work of the International Labour Conference for many years. We have actively contributed to the debate because we firmly believe in the importance of the activities of the ILO and its various bodies in achieving its objectives of promoting and supporting the efforts of the social partners in member States.

Moreover, the policy of our country is to open up to the international community and to cooperate with all the international organizations and specialized agencies. The best proof of this policy is the fact that the United Arab Emirates has hosted several international meetings, such as the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development and IMF meetings in 2003.

The report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization is extremely important, underscoring the importance of work at the national level whilst taking account of international trends. Among the very important realities stressed by the report, we should mention the facts that a successful globalization requires efficient national work, and that a fair globalization comes from

within a country, not from outside. Establishing an appropriate climate for investment, trade and the internal labour market is the right way to ensure competition with foreign markets.

Our delegation would fully agree with such an orientation, and I can assure you that our policy is based on a free economy and free trade. Our markets are open to investments from abroad and from within, we do not impose taxes, and we are creating an appropriate environment to ensure security for investors, workers and all those who live in our country.

The international community needs indeed a fair globalization that would give equal opportunities to all, a globalization that would indeed ensure freedom of trade, the free flow of capital and goods, and the free transfer of technology, and which would put an end to protectionist policies imposed by certain large industrialized countries on exports from developing countries.

The report and its recommendations thus require the cooperation of all the international and regional organizations involved in order to analyse and discuss it and to implement its recommendations.

We would agree with the Report of the ILO concerning migrant workers and the need to protect their rights. We are happy to say that migrant and foreign workers in the State of the United Arab Emirates enjoy full legal protection, perfectly in keeping with international labour standards. The situation of foreign workers is considered temporary governed by work contracts between the employer and the worker and ratified by the relevant governmental bodies. They are temporary contracts for a given period of time. Consequently, our experience is not in keeping with the concept of the international migration of workers but rather with the concept of invited workers, a term used by the Director-General to describe the situation of such workers working outside their own countries for given periods of time.

Allow me to express my thanks to the Director-General of the International Labour Office for his constant care and follow up of the situation of employers and workers in Palestine and the other occupied Arab territories. The Report presented by the high-level mission this year has revealed several kinds of suffering to which the employers and the workers in that part of the world are subjected.

From this rostrum and from this session of the Conference, I call upon the Governing Body and the Director-General to take all the necessary steps and measures within their responsibilities and mandate in order to support all the social partners in Palestine and the other occupied Arab territories, and to promote their capacity to face the negative impact of Israeli occupation, settlers' occupation and hostility. It is important for the Organization to continue to help the Palestinian people until occupation ends and their territory is liberated and an independent Palestinian state has been established with Al-Quds as the capital.

We also call upon all the relevant bodies of the ILO to offer help to all the social partners in Iraq because of the very difficult situation they are experiencing.

Original Spanish: Mr. RUGGIERO (representative, Latin American Union of Municipal Workers)

First of all, I would like to congratulate the Director-General on his Report to this 92nd Session of

the International Labour Conference, from which it is clear that positive results have been achieved through the efforts of the ILO to promote, through tripartism and social dialogue, international labour standards and policies to overcome poverty and unemployment.

This affirmation is corroborated by the documentation of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. It is apparent that there has been a slight but significant change of tack towards recognition of the importance of social and labour policies and the need to take sustained development policy into account, which is consistent with the ILO's stance on employment and job stability.

This change of tack constitutes a major contribution by the ILO in that the multinational credit organizations are heading for a review of their economic, social and labour policies.

The Latin American Union of Municipal Workers (ULAT-MUN) comprises 20 national trade union organizations of the Latin American and Caribbean region. It was founded in 1994 and since then has participated actively in the International Labour Conference and specific activities on municipal workers convened by the ILO.

Turning to the priorities of this Organization, I would like to highlight the main areas of concern for the Latin American municipal workers' movement.

The information which we received through our intense and constant interchange of information with the Latin American municipal workers' organizations, points to major problems which have a structural impact on the socio-political and economic realities of each of the societies represented and affect the employment situation in each country.

One of these is the problem of the informal economy and the need for the trade union movement to build a genuine strategy to combat informal work, starting with combating the hegemonic model underlying it.

We consider that the trade union movement should be an active participant in promoting the setting of positive standards in public policy and legislation related to work in the informal economy.

My organization would like to express its concern at situations which have been the subject of complaints by the municipal workers in some countries such as Panama, where the national Government is denying municipal governments the right to collect taxes on the installation of public billboards, which is a setback with respect to the policy of decentralization introduced in that country in 1995. Another example is Chile, where municipal governments have begun a new wave of privatization, outsourcing and management of public spaces through the concession of certain spaces to private enterprises, which municipal workers have begun to denounce.

As regards strategy, we consider that the union movement should work to build alliances with organizations in the informal economy instead of pursuing a strategy of incorporating individuals from the informal economy; hence alliance strategies should be adapted to the specific situations in specific sectors and regions. Municipal policies should encourage workers in public life to form associations and cooperatives to improve production and sales.

The ULAT-MUN has geared its activities to the common features of the socio-economic realities of

Latin American countries. The impact in the past decade of neo-liberal and adjustment policies has had direct repercussions in terms of increasingly precarious conditions of employment and unemployment.

Based on this empirical observation, we have been able not only to exchange substantial information on the realities of our countries, but also to build up common positions and formulate a strategy for the defence of individual and collective rights of municipal workers in our region.

Turning now to an assessment of working conditions in the public municipal sector in Latin America, by and large the points raised by representatives to ULAT-MUN in the past still apply; I would like to comment on the following in particular.

In view of the gravity of the situation in regard to trade union activities in Colombia, where there has been an upsurge in violence and murders of union leaders, it is our duty to condemn these events and ask this international organization to adopt drastic measures to ensure the physical safety of union leaders and the unrestricted exercise of their right to organize.

Venezuela too has seen considerable obstructions to union activities through the implementation of mechanisms which make it difficult for workers to join unions and exercise their right to representation.

Municipal workers in Chile are in the midst of a serious struggle against the central Government and have submitted a complaint of violation of labour and trade union rights to this Organization, and this also calls for the explicit public support of ULAT-MUN and all of its affiliates.

In Argentina, the Confederation of Municipal Workers of Argentina (COEMA) is demanding a review of salaries to bring them up to the level of those in the national public service. As a result, unionized workers and their organization have called for industrial action.

We also denounce the violations of union rights which have been committed in most of the municipalities in El Salvador.

In general, privatization and outsourcing of activities in the sector in Latin America have occurred to a lesser extent than in previous years but, in some cases, this is still a major cause of labour disputes, of corruption, of dismissals, of deteriorating working conditions and of a reduction in the quality of public service. The same is true of certain repercussions of neo-liberal policies, which continue to affect the stability of employment in the public sector, since the intention is to reduce or even eliminate it altogether in many countries of the region.

We publicly declare our objection to this policy and advocate the need to apply the principles of protection and the guarantee of rights, in accordance with ILO Conventions Nos. 87, 98 and 151.

Another matter of concern and a source of injustice are the low salaries of municipal workers in Latin America, resulting from the persistence of unfair patterns of wealth distribution which still prevail in the region, and which are among the most backward in the world. Hence the frequent and persistent wage claims by trade union organizations throughout the continent: their income is well below the poverty line in the region.

We need to proceed with the incorporation of the social and labour agenda in economic-integration processes in the region, and this continues to be a

matter of concern for my organization, particularly in view of the severe adverse effects of the recent international crisis in the region.

We advocate the incorporation of a social floor as proposed by the ILO, in integration processes with, as a minimum, references to non-discrimination, prohibition of forced labour, freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, the abolition of child labour – all of which are essential components of a viable integration process.

To conclude, I would like to mention the subject of the foreign debt burden borne by our countries and the heavy pressure brought to bear by groups of creditors, especially what is termed the “vulture funds”, and the multilateral credit organizations. All these affects their economic growth and development and the implementation of social justice for a fair and sustainable society. The focus of this Organization should now be on the future.

Mr. DE PURY (*representative, World Organization Against Torture*)

The World Organization Against Torture wants to intervene about the Appendix to the Report of the Director-General on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories.

The World Organization Against Torture, also known as the OMCT, is a network of 266 non-governmental organizations, either national or international, which informs the International Secretariat in Geneva of serious human rights violations.

In response to each case, the OMCT launches urgent appeals to the greatest possible number of individuals and organizations, directed towards the authorities involved, demanding that violated rights be respected. These appeals are also important sources of information for the international community.

In November of last year, a mission to Israel and the occupied territories was carried out by the OMCT and the International Federation for Human Rights in the name of the joint programme, the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, together with Forefront, a global network of grass-roots human rights defenders based in New York.

The Report states that among the victims of rights violations is the Democracy and Workers' Rights Centre, as Israeli soldiers broke into the headquarters in Ramallah and the Director-General was prevented from travelling abroad to attend the meeting. Knowing the situation that workers are subjected to, the hostility towards an organization that defends their rights is not surprising, particularly since workers' rights are among the rights in question.

The three organizations thus exposed the serious impact that a purely military approach to security has on human rights and particularly on labour and economic, social and cultural rights. For instance, Israel's construction of its separation fence, more commonly known as the “apartheid wall” in Palestine's West Bank, has led to grave land and housing rights violations. The extension of the wall is annexing land and water wells and will enslave 95,000 Palestinians on the West Bank, in addition to cutting off 200,000 Palestinian residents in East Jerusalem from the West Bank.

Another significant problem is the demolition of houses which has been recognized by the Committee Against Torture as constituting “cruel, inhuman

or degrading treatment or punishment”, which are the terms defining torture.

On 17th May of this year, the OMCT was informed that 2,197 people were rendered homeless, due to the demolition of 191 homes during the first-15 days of May. The Rafah area was most significantly affected. Furthermore, Israeli forces have destroyed 5,013 houses in Gaza, rendering 38,215 inhabitants homeless from 29 September 2000 to 15 May 2004.

The Israeli Government has also expressed its intention to destroy hundreds more houses in Rafah in spite of the army’s statement that it has no future plans to continue demolitions, except in cases of “military necessity”.

Furthermore, the situation of workers in the occupied territories is an issue of great concern due to the closures policy. The unemployment rate rose from 10 per cent prior to the intifada in the third quarter of 2000 to 53 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2002 – and is worse today.

In addition, a new aspect of the past system was introduced from May 2002 causing Palestinian residents and, especially workers, to need special Israeli permits to travel within the West Bank and Gaza.

Another issue is the denial of access to medical care. We launched an urgent appeal about two Palestinian detainees with deteriorating health conditions in Israeli prisons. Despite the repeated requests for medical assistance, it was not given to them, which constitutes a clear case of ill-treatment under the convention against torture.

Thus, the Israeli State has clearly violated human rights, international laws and treaties. These include the human rights on property, work, freedom of movement, water and all elements of the right to adequate housing. It has violated such treaties as the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights and several Conventions of the International Labour Organization.

Finally, it has violated the Fourth Geneva Convention and The Hague Regulations of 1907.

Original French: Mr. WALLIMANN (representative, World Movement of Christian Workers)

The World Movement of Christian Workers, the WMCW, would like to use this opportunity of being present at the 92nd Session of the International Labour Conference to express its full support for the ILO’s highlighting of the theme of decent work for all. In fact, the globalization of our economy continues to make work more insecure, weakening the fabric of society and plunging thousands of workers and their families into poverty and despair. The 21st century is seeing imposed the model of informal work, which, all evidence suggests, has undermined the relationship between people and their work, which, in turn, has dangerous implications for the family and the social environment. There are so many workers who are now being exposed to the risk of being victims of all sorts of physical and mental violence, including murder and imprisonment, unfair dismissal and even unfounded refusal of visas to some WMCW members who wanted to come from southern countries to the north to participate in the international life of our Movement.

It is against this background that the representatives of 70 member organizations of the World

Movement of Christian Workers, representing about two and half million workers from 68 countries, met in Quebec in May 2004 for the Movement’s international seminar followed by its tenth General Assembly.

Taking to heart the ILO’s objectives for “decent work for all”, this General Assembly defined three main goals for its initiatives over the next four years.

The first of these is to bring together workers from all spheres, whether they be employed or unemployed, with particular emphasis on those who are socially excluded. The second is to contribute to implementing human rights with particular emphasis on economic, social and cultural rights. The third is to make sure that the voices of workers are heard within the United Nations, through the churches and civil society. These initiatives aim to establish alternatives to existing economic and work patterns in the different continents and also to defend women’s rights as a priority.

By the end of this four-year period, the World Movement of Christian Workers intends to publish a White Paper on implementing these goals and we will not fail to deliver it to all relevant institutions.

Original Spanish: Mr. PARRA GAONA (Workers’ adviser, Paraguay)

May I first be allowed to congratulate the President on his election to preside over the 92nd Session of the International Labour Conference. We emphasize and appreciate the words of the Director-General of the ILO, Dr. Juan Somavia, who, in his Report, highlights the fundamental rights of workers and the dignity of work.

We express our concern about the lack of employment policy in the labour world.

As workers we reiterate our concern about the growing unemployment rates in our Latin American and Caribbean countries.

Once again, we denounce the structural adjustment policies prepared in the inappropriately named “Washington Consensus”, aimed at giving priority to macroeconomic policies to control inflation and overlooking employment and investment. The Nobel Peace Prize winner for economy in 2001, Dr Josef Stiglitz, has denounced these policies because they produce economic recession and unemployment.

We reiterate our denunciation of the devastating effects of globalization, as stated by Dr. Josef Stiglitz which is confirmed by the report of the 26 members of the special committee set up by the ILO, which calls for in-depth reforms and a change of direction with respect to globalization so as not to continue destroying the small and medium-sized enterprises, weakening the national state and increasing unemployment, critical poverty and social exclusion.

As workers, we reiterate our objection to any neo-liberal model and to the labour reforms that destabilize employment and render labour relations flexible and precarious. If we continue with such policies, there will be no point in the ILO nor the consultative forum and the various MERCOSUR bodies making any efforts.

We demand the establishment of a financial fund of MERCOSUR to promote public, private and social investment to create worthy employment in the subregion.

We are on the alert to avoid precarious employment taking place, as is the case in our countries today.

We request that the agreements established in MERCOSUR be taken up in each of our countries and we support the document signed by our labour ministers in MERCOSUR at the regional conference on employment held in Buenos Aires in April this year which had the support of the ILO. As a major strategy of the States, we have put decent work as a strategy for development. This is very different from what it is claimed is being carried out with the Free Trade Area of the Americas.

However, the practice of our country to date is not in line with these documents, because, in spite of having ratified important ILO Conventions such as ILO Conventions Nos. 87 and 98, these have remained dead letters and companies continue to violate these basic rights with a lack of compliance with social security rights, the right to health and the right to dignity in the lives of workers.

We would like to mention the violations and disregard of the Conventions on freedom of association and collective bargaining, the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169), the Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97), and the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29). The workers in the transport sector continue to work for 14-16 hours a day, violating the legal requirements of eight hours. Workers in the Migone sanatorium are suffering from trade union persecution and dismissals and workers in the communications media, in the case of the Puerto Casado community, are subjugated as regards their rights by pseudo-investors in the Moon Sect, which has reached even this area. We also want to mention the rural communities, which are fighting for the right to land and livelihood, calling for total agrarian reform. We should also mention the public sector workers who are being persecuted in their rights, the workers of the Yacyreta energy company, which is not complying with the collective labour agreement, who are being subject to anti-union persecution and the workers of the Paraguayan Tebycuary sugar refinery and the Iturbe sugar refinery.

The external debt, which channels the savings of our countries towards the payments of interest and commission, leaves nothing available for the necessary public investment.

For quality employment, we must have a structure of distribution of income throughout society, because the logic of the market is accumulation and concentration which aggravates social inequality. We must more clearly propose the role of the State and its relations with the market, avoiding extreme cases where there is either the dictatorship of the State or that of the market. It is also our wish to comply with salary readjustment of 25 per cent for the loss of purchasing power that has accumulated since 1989.

In our country we do not want a speculative economy, we want a productive employment economy.

As a positive aspect, we would like to mention the ratification of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), and the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138).

We would also like to refer, as a positive case, to the payment of the contribution to the ILO, enabling the active participation of our delegates and the right to vote. The Government has raised the ques-

tion of refinancing of the debt for contributions in arrears.

Finally, we want to express our solidarity with our colleagues from Colombia and Guatemala and other trade union and social organizations which suffer permanent persecution. We demand the liberation of our colleague Rigoberto Dueñas, who has been unfairly jailed in Guatemala for a year now because he fought for the fundamental rights of workers and the freedom of our trade union colleagues in Cuba.

We reaffirm our commitment to the construction of a new society, which should be based on peace and social justice.

Mr. GOODLEIGH (*Workers' delegate, Jamaica*)

We should like to begin by congratulating the President on the occasion of his election to preside over this 92nd Session of the International Labour Conference.

We live in a post-modern age, driven by the forces of globalization, information technology and regionalization. These forces generate a complex range of social, economic and political issues. Many of these issues are not new, but have become critical at this juncture in history.

Primarily among these issues are those of: sustainable economic and social development, which also address questions of equity and social justice; global financial instability; global environmental and climate change; pandemics; international crime and corruption; issues of fair trade; issues of the rise in power of multilateral and transnational companies; and issues of governance.

These surging global issues have arisen at a time when we have not all implemented in a satisfactory manner the fundamental workplace policies advocated by the ILO, over an extended period, during which the ILO has sought to ensure that these policies are established in the world's workplaces.

Despite these efforts by the ILO, many Governments have either failed to ratify, or have ratified and failed to implement, these minimum standards and policies in their planning processes.

The challenge we face is how to ensure that these agreed minimum standards are reflected in the world's workplaces and, at the same time, meet the challenges posed by the post-modern age.

One of the obstacles we face in trying to meet this challenge is the fact that the international multilaterals are not in agreement about ILO standards. They have differing views about workplace governance. We are well aware that, in the past, the Bretton Woods twins, namely the IMF and the World Bank, spoke of structural adjustment programmes and the lowering of workers' standards of living. These prescriptions were advocated whilst the ILO was speaking of the establishment of minimum standards and raising workers' standards of living.

In the current context, the IMF and the World Bank advocate flexible enterprises devoid of labour laws and minimum standards. They consider that laws and standards distort the world's labour markets. On the other hand, the social partners, Governments, unions and Employers in the ILO have accepted the concept of decent work and the establishment of minimum standards in the world's labour markets.

It is precisely this vast disparity in policy approaches between multilaterals that aids and abets many Governments in ignoring the Conventions they have negotiated and agreed to in the ILO.

It is this difference that allows the practice of "situational ethics" by Governments. This is the practice of saying one thing in the ILO and subscribing in the IMF and the World Bank setting to a set of policies that are diametrically opposed to the ILO standards.

It is a problem that the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization has clearly recognized, when it recommended in its report that policy coherence initiatives should be launched by the relevant international organizations, namely the United Nations bodies, the World Bank, the IMF and the WTO. The Commission specifically mentions the issues of global growth, investment, employment creation, gender equality, education and training.

We would expect that in that context, some agreement could be reached in terms of decent work and minimum standards in the world's workplaces. It is our view that, if this is to be accomplished, the world's multilaterals must ignore the World Bank's dated view that the primary objective of a labour market should be efficiency, and they must agree that, in a post-modern age, the multiple objectives of efficiency, productivity, equity and social justice are what the world's labour market should be about.

It is only a reliance on these objectives that can anchor any agreement on policy coherence. It is only a reliance on these objectives that can ensure that trade agreements and WTO rules are fair and socially sensitive. It is only a reliance on these objectives that, in the words of the Commission, will ensure that those countries with greater decision-making power in international bodies will consider all interests and meet their international commitments.

Currently, it is only a commitment to these shared objectives that will ensure that Governments across the spectrum of development honour their obligations in the ILO, because if, in this post-modern age of globalization, we are to succeed politically and socially, we must address questions of equity, social justice, efficiency and productivity in the world's workplaces.

In closing, we in the Jamaican trade union movement would like to thank the ILO Regional Office for its invaluable assistance in the past year.

Original Spanish: Mr. FOSTIK (Employers' delegate, Uruguay)

This delegation would like to join other speakers congratulating the President upon his election at this session of the Conference.

We are very aware of the effects of globalization on the relationship between economic and social activities, particularly those based upon new knowledge and technologies.

For many years, our society has been exposed to the influence of outside forces which to a certain degree continue to mark our economy. Globalization requires careful planning so that it involves aspects of world trade and employment, whilst at the same time providing for the well-being of all, thereby creating fair globalization.

It would be opportune for the Office to place proposals before the next Governing Body upon the way in which the Organization can specifically respond to the recommendations of the report of the World Commission.

The follow-up to the report conducted by the Office, through the Governing Body and consultations with its constituents, will certainly determine

through a consensus the effective ways whereby a greater number of countries can begin to enjoy the benefits of globalization.

We hope that this process to follow up the report will not affect the resources allocated to further the traditional mandate of the ILO so that the Organization can continue to focus on the promotion of quality employment as the main escape route from poverty.

If we at the ILO were to associate these efforts with an extensive campaign to propagate skills and knowledge, we would be ensuring a move towards offering a better life for all.

The necessary support of the ILO in the development and updating of entrepreneurial spirit will optimize management skills and thus generate better income opportunities and improved sustainability on the world stage. ILO support is also necessary to help employers develop policies which are in keeping with the social responsibilities of the enterprise.

Governments should develop the appropriate environment to stimulate the reinvestment of those companies which still have the capability to do so, to ensure the future of existing business plans and to bring in new investment or genuine national and foreign investors.

There is a most important task that should not be forgotten: giving special and permanent attention to the development of formal SMEs. Decent work begins in the formal sector, whatever the size of the enterprise.

We would like to express our appreciation for the efforts that have been made for migrant workers; workers throughout the world who are seeking means to earn a living.

The Report on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories shows that the situation has almost remained unchanged during the reporting period, despite the reinforced programme of technical cooperation specially dedicated to that area.

More than ever it is necessary to obtain the support of donors to maintain the programmes to mitigate the distressing situation in the region.

We must build up a new environment for all of us.

(Mr. Ray Guevara takes the Chair.)

Mr. FINLAY (*Employers' delegate, Canada*)

It is an honour to speak on the Director-General's Report, *A fair globalization: The role of the ILO*.

Canadian business is pleased to see that the debate and discussions surrounding globalization are maturing. There is recognition of the positive socio-economic effects of the evolving world economy. No longer are the world's ills attributed to globalization. Instead we are starting to hear of the potential of globalization as a vehicle for improving opportunities for all.

There are two points in particular that I would like to address today. Further and more detailed examination of the recommendations will take place at the Governing Body meeting in November.

First, I am concerned that policy coherence is not fully understood. We are here because we respect and value the potential of the ILO. Policy coherence means to me that we also respect the expertise and mandates of other institutions. Barely a whisper is made of the tremendous contribution of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report entitled *Unleashing entrepreneurship: Making business work for the poor* and the work the UNDP

is doing to generate action from this report. I believe that there is a great potential for synergy here, but it will require greater attention from the ILO to the activities of the UNDP.

I might have considered this an oversight, except for the arguments in the Report made to enter the realm of economic policy. The Report refers to the Declaration of Philadelphia language mandating the ILO to examine and consider all international economic and financial policies and measures, and then concludes from that that this means the ILO must step into the economic policy arena. Such an unfounded interpretation and direction leads me to be concerned that the ILO might conflict with, rather than seek coherence in, international socio-economic policy. The language referred to from the Declaration of Philadelphia suggests consideration of international economic and financial policies; it does not invite the ILO to step into such areas, especially where other agencies have this mandate, or invite the ILO to step out of its own mandate in search of others.

My second concern is that the Report suggests new directions and even new resources for the ILO. The ILO is currently involved in many matters meriting attention, including entrepreneurship, youth employment, small and medium-sized enterprise development, enterprise growth and employment creation. These are just some of the areas that align with the issues and concerns arising in the Report. Thus, the ILO should be cautious about setting out in new directions.

For the most part, the structure for addressing matters arising from the Report falls within the current framework of ILO programmes, to the extent those matters come within the purview of the ILO. We may find we need greater clarity in mandate, greater focus, and possibly the reallocation of existing resources, but the core structure is there, as long as the ILO does not branch out into areas better left to other international, national or local agencies. Thus, I hope that the Governing Body takes the approach of focusing on areas of the ILO's core competencies, and seeks to utilize those resources that the ILO has now, most effectively. This is a basic rule that business knows well. Focus on your core products, and deliver in a cost-efficient and effective way.

We look forward to continuing to be involved in this discussion and look forward especially to the discussion at the meeting of the Governing Body in November.

Ms. WINTOUR (*representative, Public Services International*)

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of Public Services International (PSI).

PSI welcomes the report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization. The report highlights "the important role of the State in managing the process of integration into the global economy, and in ensuring that it meets both economic and social objectives". However, the capacity of the State to fulfil its important role has been severely undermined by the conditionalities laid down by international financial institutions and other forms of bilateral lending.

The Global Report, *Organizing for social justice*, estimates that 15 million public sector jobs were lost in 1999 and 2000 alone. The report recognizes the "policy bias, especially within the international financial community, in favour of private sector

solutions". It also recognizes that changes have been introduced through "settlements imposed without discussion or negotiation". These have resulted in public employees becoming "demoralized or radical – or both". Under these conditions, the sense of public service ethos that motivated public employees has been undermined.

These are the same public service employees who are being called upon to meet the targets laid down by the Millennium Development Goals and to provide anti-retroviral drugs to 3 million people with HIV/AIDS by 2005 under the recently launched World Health Organization initiative. If the international community is serious about addressing poverty and saving lives, it must take responsibility for reversing the catastrophic decline of the public service.

One of PSI's main priorities is the global campaign for quality public services. This is a positive and proactive campaign, aimed at strengthening critically important public services. A renewed commitment must be made to the Millennium Development Goals through better and more aid to developing countries, debt relief, fair trade, and investment in quality public services.

Despite the current economic fashion for privatization, there is strong evidence that quality public services are a critical path to building sustainable economies and inclusive societies.

Where access to water and energy is privatized, respect for human rights or for labour rights is undermined, economic growth is reduced and there is increased pressure on women and children and increased risks to the environment. PSI commends the United Nations system for recognizing the right to water and supports the call of the French energy unions for the creation of a United Nations right to energy. PSI calls on all United Nations bodies to support such a rights and to create a global day to draw attention to the right to energy.

Gender equality is central to the PSI programme of action. For a number of years, PSI has voiced concern at the lack of representation of women at this Conference and in the ILO's senior management. PSI has adopted a five-year pay equity campaign. The follow-up action plan to the Global Report on equality at work includes proposals which reflect the needs of public sector unions, including guidelines on gender-neutral job evaluation systems, improved statistical indicators and tripartite meetings to promote pay equity. PSI therefore welcomes the Resolution concerning the promotion of gender equality, pay equity and maternity protection before the Conference this year and its recognition of the positive role of public services in contributing to the achievement of gender equality.

PSI also welcomes the general discussion on migration and the search for a multilateral framework. PSI is particularly concerned about the impact of migration on the delivery of health and education services in developing countries. We call for the adoption of ethical recruitment guidelines, monitoring and sanctions against unscrupulous recruitment agencies. Due consideration should be given to establishing a system to compensate developing countries when their health professionals are recruited to work abroad.

Finally, the Global Report, *Organizing for social justice*, argues for a sea change in the global culture to strengthen respect for freedom of association and collective bargaining. There are too many cases

worldwide where public sector trade unions are subjected to discrimination, including arbitrary dismissals and arrests, and on occasion murder. PSI is particularly concerned about the situation in the Republic of Korea and in Tamil Nadu, India, where last year over 200,000 public sector employees were arbitrarily dismissed and 6,000 arrested. In Chile, the Government has prepared draft legislation that would effectively deny municipal employees the right to bargain collectively. These are all cases where the supervisory mechanisms of the ILO have played a vital role. However, in the case of Colombia, and given the continuing and systematic violations of human rights, PSI calls upon the ILO to adopt additional measures to address the situation of impunity in which these crimes are committed.

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT (Mr. Ray GUEVARA)

To conclude our discussion in Plenary of the report of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Report of the Director-General, I now have great pleasure in giving the floor to the spokespersons of the Employers' and the Workers' groups.

Mr. FUNES DE RIOJA (Employers' adviser and substitute delegate, Argentina, speaking on behalf of the Employers' group)

It is clear that the recommendations of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization are relevant to the ILO and its mandate and that they present the ILO with a clear opportunity in terms of its visibility and relevance in the multilateral system. It is also clear that there is absolute unanimity on one crucial point – everybody wants to see the benefits of globalization spread more widely. This perhaps is the most striking message. In that respect, the World Commission has helped to move the debate on globalization away from confrontational polemics. We need to continue this positive process and develop the debate in an appropriate way.

The report is wide-ranging in its recommendations and proposals and evidently only some parts of them are relevant to the ILO. It was evident to me, from listening to many delegates, that the ILO is well placed to give effect to many of the recommendations without changing or weakening its current work or traditional mandate. Increasingly, the ILO is focusing on the promotion of employment as a central route from poverty and this is ostensibly a very positive development.

The goal of decent work as a global goal fits in with the ILO's response to the Millennium Development Goals. This opportunity should be seized. Fostering SMEs and entrepreneurs, which is at the heart of poverty alleviation, is also an objective. Let us see the following kinds of programmes accelerated: SME development, fostering entrepreneurship, helping those in the informal economy formalize their activities, developing innovative social security schemes, developing mechanisms for microfinancing to enable enterprise start-up and development, channelling migrant remittances into microfinancing schemes and, crucially, helping to create the right regulatory environment to see those policies and programmes succeed, in particular those focusing on governance and corruption. These are the essential elements that would enable more developing countries to access the benefits of globalization.

There is also greater recognition by international and national policy-makers that without the role of the private sector we will never successfully combat poverty. The recent report from the UNDP Commission on the Private Sector and Development, *Unleashing entrepreneurship: Making business work for the poor* is another important validation of this trend. The ILO is, however, uniquely placed in the multilateral system to capitalize on this. It has employment creation at the heart of its mandate and it has an "institutional" partner in business. The ILO is institutionally connected to the largest network of business in the world. This network represents all the different voices from the business community at the national level. This network needs to be harnessed – it offers enormous potential.

The role of democratic values and good governance and the need to tackle corruption as key enabling tools in accessing the benefits of globalization, were given particular emphasis by a number of delegates. This is an area where Employers would like to see the ILO play more of a role, a fact evidenced by the resolution on governance and democratic values that the Employers tabled in the Resolutions Committee – a resolution that was widely supported.

The calls by many delegates for the Director-General to continue his work in reforming the body of international labour standards is something we also greatly welcome. International labour standards are at the centrepiece of what the ILO does – improving that machinery and making it more suited to the twenty-first century workplace is something Employers strongly support.

The World Commission report places emphasis on responsibility and the fact that globalization starts at home and this is important. Sometimes there is a tendency to look first to the international level for solutions without first examining what can be done at home. Without that as a first step, international responses may not be either sufficient or sustainable.

One recent initiative that aims to try and achieve this coherence and has done so with some success, is the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) process – a genuine attempt at national policy coherence. This is an area where the ILO is playing a role, but it should deepen its involvement. In this the social partners have a key role and I see this in terms of what the Director-General called for, with the ILO acting as a "collective organization" where the official and the social partners work together. But the social partners will need capacity-building assistance to enable them to play a more effective part in the PRSP process.

Employers are broadly supportive of the calls for policy coherence initiatives. We feel that such initiatives offer an opportunity for the ILO. In such policy coherence initiatives the ILO should bring its very unique tripartite perspective to international policy debates and discussions – it has, we believe, real value to add. All institutions would need to engage in such a process in an even-handed manner, recognizing each other's mandates and responsibilities.

Above all, what needs to be avoided are attempts to try and devise "alternative" policies, policies to compete with, or rival, those of other institutions with specific expertise. Let me emphasize this point – the ILO certainly has very valuable niche in the multilateral system and we do not want to see this

niche diluted. The Decent Work Agenda can be a useful tool when engaging in international policy dialogues, but that should be done through the ILO's current strategic objectives.

What nobody wants are more duplicative initiatives – which would, as I said, add confusion. Existing programmes need to be built to have partners found for them where this is possible. There must also be a sense of realism about which of these programmes should be explored. For instance, there are many existing forums that discuss macroeconomic policies and if, for example, a policy coherence initiative were about trying to generate a better set of monetary and fiscal policies, then I think it would be unlikely to succeed.

One of the key areas to which we think that the ILO should really devote its energies and should lead a policy coherence initiative is in the area of the informal economy and how to create the right regulatory environment for informal economy operators to migrate to the formal economy. The Office was given very clear guidance on this issue at the 2002 session of the International Labour Conference, during a discussion which produced excellent conclusions and, may I add, that were agreed and accompanied by a very large consensus on how to proceed. This is the kind of opportunity – and I use that word deliberately – that the ILO needs to seize.

There has been much support for a forum on globalization between international organizations. Certainly, this idea should be explored but again, we need to be mindful of duplication.

The ILO has a unique structure that works well for its needs and aims. However, every organization has its own particular way of structuring itself in line with its own aims. We need to respect such structures and processes. The comparative advantage of this tripartite house needs to be mobilized, built on, developed and fully utilized. We have heard much talk of “coherence” in the last two weeks. Let us try and get greater coherence out of that team.

Sir Roy TROTMAN (*Workers' delegate, Barbados, speaking on behalf of the Workers' group*)

I guess we can say that we have much to be grateful for. For over the last two weeks or so we are convinced that everyone seems to be satisfied that there is need for a fair globalization for all. We do get contradictions from time to time, but at least we start from a position where we all seem to be in agreement.

Some two weeks ago, we suggested that there needed to be some changes in the approach to debt, changes in poverty eradication strategies, in wealth creation approaches, in employment creation efforts, in wealth distribution, and in the development of common respect for our standards governing the world of work, among other things. From the approach of the body that was present, we got the distinct view that most people who were present then, two Mondays ago, were quite happy that these were issues that we wanted to have addressed.

Today, having heard the debate on the Director-General's Report, it is our view that we have to start an initiative: an initiative to incorporate decent work and the respect for labour standards into the policies of the global economy. It is essential to assess the impact which the ILO is having on the core policies of institutions like the IMF, the World

Bank, UNCTAD and the WTO. This means, in the words of the World Commission's report, “Making decent work a key goal of the economic policy, by giving priority to employment creation, protecting fundamental rights at work, strengthening social protection, and promoting social dialogue.” The report goes on to say that policies should be gender-sensitive and based on a new social contract which reflects the interests of both employers and workers.

We also have to enhance the relevance of the supervisory system of the ILO as a positive global mechanism to promote decent work and social justice. In this regard, measures to be taken to give effect to the recommendation of the World Commission to the effect that the capacity of the ILO to promote respect for core labour standards should be reinforced. All relevant international organizations should assume their responsibility to promote these standards and ensure that their policies and programmes do not impede their realization – I would refer you to paragraph 426 of the World Commission's report.

Further we must seek to follow up the World Commission's report by giving added emphasis and significance to the implementation of the Global Employment Agenda endorsed by the Governing Body way back in the year 2002. There are seven principles or pillars underlying the Global Employment Agenda, which are further elaborated as core elements of the Global Employment Framework. The Agenda promotes both the quantitative object of increasing freely chosen productive employment and the qualitative dimension of employment, and I am pleased to note that we have already had some work in this area in the China Employment Forum. Very shortly, there will be the Ouagadougou Employment Forum in Burkina Faso. There is, or there should be, some discussion with a view to a similar exercise in India, and of course there needs to be one for Central and Eastern Europe. It would seem to us that Latin America should not be forgotten because I do not think that the Chairpersons of the Workers' group and Employers' group would be very happy if that were to happen. It might be desirable for small-island states, possibly the Caribbean and the Pacific working together, to recognize that employment agendas might be able to give us that resurgence of competitiveness which is much to be desired.

Everyone has agreed that we have to promote coherence. In fact, at the last Governing Body meeting, I spoke on the contradiction inherent in the lack of coherence. I refer to this subject again today because some reference to it was made earlier today and might lead those who do not know to the view that the ILO should be boxed in and should not seek to enter into dialogue with other bodies: in short, that the ILO should seek to avoid trying to create change in social conditions across the world.

If we are going to accept the Global Report, we have to accept that the World Commission has to give the ILO the moral high ground and the social responsibility to effect global change. Indeed, we had words to that effect from such a body as the World Bank representatives themselves back in March, when they made a reference to the different voices that individual governments assume at the level of the IMF, at the level of the World Bank, at the level of Ministers of Finance, and then again at the ILO.

We have to guard against killing the baby before it has even been weaned. Recalling the World Commission's recommendation, we would wish to make the point here that there should be stronger action and wider social dialogue to promote decent work in export processing zones and, more generally, in global production systems, and that the ILO should provide advice and assistance to those engaged in such dialogue if and when it is required to do so. Indeed, we would suggest that the ILO should establish a unit to cover work in this area of export processing zones.

Globalization has certainly led to the widening gap between the rich and the poor. Large numbers of poor people in developing countries find themselves working for less than US\$1 a day. In fact, it is true to say that the number of people who have moved down to that level has increased by over 30 per cent, especially in the Africa region.

The prospects of achieving the Millennium Development Goals therefore appear to be very slight, and the Workers' group will support measures that are designed to promote the forgiveness of debt and to increase resource flows to developing countries. It is significant for us in this regard that fewer than 50 per cent of the countries involved meet the ODA requirements of 0.7 per cent, and the ILO has got to

take a moral stand to address these issues. In summary, the conditions I have referred must be met if we are to address the future of the world with the ILO's assistance. An urgent process is needed, and we have to be able to identify the major issues which must be dealt with: the issues of war, the issues of want, the issues of waste, environmental destruction and dumping, the issue of the weather for, although we cannot control the weather, we can do much to set up rapid response mechanisms – and the issue of migration. We should bear in mind that one is not necessarily exclusive of the other.

The Workers' group and the Employers' group must work and work sometimes together, as well as working with Governments, to ensure that a work programme is put in place which seeks to address these issues as a matter of urgency, and we must be able to give direction to, and support for, the programmes as they are brought together by the house to achieve these objectives. Preliminary work must start, and it must start now. I am obliged to you.

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT

With these two statements, we now conclude the discussion on the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General.

(The Conference adjourned at 12.45 p.m.)

Seventeenth sitting

Tuesday 15 June 2004, 3 p.m.

President: Mr Ray Guevara

REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES: SUBMISSION, DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT

We shall now proceed to the second item on the agenda, the report of the Finance Committee of Government Representatives, which is published in *Provisional Record* No. 17.

The Officers of the Finance Committee of Government Representatives were as follows: the Chairperson and Reporter was Mr. Jonzon and the Vice-Chairperson was Mr. Kleckner. It is my pleasure now to give the floor to Mr. Jonzon to submit the report of the Finance Committee of Government Representatives.

Mr. JONZON (*Government delegate, Sweden; Chairperson and Reporter of the Finance Committee of Government Representatives*)

I have the honour to submit to the Conference the report of the Finance Committee of Government Representatives. This report is published in *Provisional Record* No. 17 and contains the recommendations of the Committee on the matters it considered. The seven resolutions proposed by the Committee for adoption by the Conference appear at the end of the report, immediately before the appendices.

The main item of business for the Finance Committee was the Financial Report and Audited Financial Statements for 2002-03.

The Committee was pleased to see that the External Auditor had given an unqualified audit opinion and had put forward a number of valuable recommendations concerning the IRIS project, the ILO's Human Resources Strategy, property management and financial matters in his report, all of which were accepted by the Office. The Office is already acting on the recommendations and, in accordance with normal practice, it will be submitting a report to the March 2005 session of the Governing Body on the follow-up action taken. The Committee had no hesitation in proposing that the Financial Report and Audited Financial Statements for 2002-03 be adopted in accordance with article 29 of the Financial Regulations.

The next two items of the report concern requests for the right to vote received from the Governments of Iraq and Paraguay. Satisfied that the non-payment of their past contributions was due to circumstances beyond the control of these two States and that acceptable proposals had been put forward

for the settlement of the arrears, the Committee recommends that Iraq and Paraguay be granted the right to vote.

A paper proposing a rate of assessment of the contribution to the ILO regular budget for a new member State, the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, was then considered. The proposal, covering contributions for both 2003 and 2004, was accepted.

The Committee looked particularly carefully at the proposal concerning the scale of assessment of contributions to the ILO regular budget for 2005, which had already been the subject of debate three months ago, at the 289th Session of the Governing Body. The Committee noted that, in accordance with normal practice, the 2005 scale of assessment is based on the United Nations scale of assessment. During the discussion, certain member States referred to the difficulties encountered by the sharp increase in the resulting level of contributions. A consensus nevertheless emerged, and the Committee recommends that the Conference adopt the scale of assessment of contributions for 2005.

The Committee considered a paper concerning the composition of the ILO Administrative Tribunal. The Committee unanimously accepted a recommendation from the Governing Body that the Conference express its appreciation to Mr. Jean-Francois Egli for his service to the Tribunal over the last decade and adopt a proposal from the Governing Body concerning two appointments to the ILO Administrative Tribunal. Nominations to the ILO Staff Pension Committee were also examined, and the Committee proposes that the Conference adopt the resolution as set out at the end of the report.

In concluding, I would like to express my thanks to my Vice-Chairperson, Mr. Kleckner of Hungary, to the members of the Committee and also to the members of the secretariat, all of whom helped me greatly in my task as Chairman.

My final word is the deep-felt thanks from the Committee directed to Mr. Juneja and the Employers' and Workers' Vice-Chairpersons the PFAC of the Governing Body join me in this expression of appreciation and thanks.

May I commend our report to you for adoption?

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT

The general discussion on the report of the Finance Committee of Government Representatives is now open.

Original Arabic: Mr. ALKHULAIFI (*Government delegate, Qatar*)

On behalf of my Government, I would like to thank the Chair and members of the Finance Committee of Government Representatives for the positive results achieved. I should also like to commend Mr. Somavia, the Director-General, and all the Officers of the Conference for their efforts to serve the Members of this Organization and to implement all the programmes.

Qatar is a Member that pays its contributions regularly, but we have noted that our level on the scale of assessment has increased by almost 30 per cent, and while the Government of Qatar approves the scale of assessment, we do share the reservations expressed by some Members as to the method used to compute the new scale, whilst expressing our approval of the programmes adopted and implemented by this Organization.

Original Spanish: THE PRESIDENT

As there are no further speakers, I propose that we proceed with the approval of the report of the Committee, which is contained in paragraphs 1-62 and Appendices I-III. If there are no objections, may I take it that the report is approved?

(The report – paragraphs 1-62 and Appendices I, II and III – is approved.)

RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE FINANCIAL REPORT AND AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR 2002-03: ADOPTION

Original Spanish: THE PRESIDENT

We shall now proceed with the adoption of the resolutions submitted by the Finance Committee of Government Representatives, starting with the resolution concerning the Financial Report and Audited Financial Statements for 2002-03. If there are no objections, may I take it that the resolution is adopted?

(The resolution is adopted.)

RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE ARREARS OF CONTRIBUTIONS OF IRAQ: ADOPTION

Original Spanish: THE PRESIDENT

We shall now proceed with the adoption of the resolution concerning arrears of contributions of Iraq.

I would like to inform you in this connection that both this resolution and the following one have to do with the arrears of contributions of two member States. In this connection, a record vote will be held in plenary tomorrow morning, in pursuance of article 13, paragraph 4, of the ILO Constitution.

If there are no objections, may I take it that the resolution is adopted?

(The resolution is adopted.)

RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE ARREARS OF CONTRIBUTIONS OF PARAGUAY: ADOPTION

Original Spanish: THE PRESIDENT

We shall now proceed with the adoption of the resolution concerning the arrears of contributions of Paraguay. If there are no objections, may I take it that the resolution is adopted?

(The resolution is adopted.)

RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE ASSESSMENT OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF NEW MEMBER STATES: ADOPTION

Original Spanish: THE PRESIDENT

We shall now proceed with the adoption of the resolution concerning the assessment of the contributions of new member States. If there are no objections, may I take it that the resolution is adopted?

(The resolution is adopted.)

RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS OF CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE BUDGET FOR 2005: ADOPTION

Original Spanish: THE PRESIDENT

We shall now proceed with the adoption of the resolution concerning the scale of assessments of contributions to the budget for 2005. If there are no objections, may I take it that the resolution is adopted?

(The resolution is adopted.)

RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE COMPOSITION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION: ADOPTION

Original Spanish: THE PRESIDENT

We shall now proceed with the adoption of the resolution concerning the composition of the Administrative Tribunal of the International Labour Organization. If there are no objections, may I take it that the resolution is adopted?

(The resolution is adopted.)

RESOLUTION CONCERNING APPOINTMENTS TO THE ILO STAFF PENSION COMMITTEE (UNITED NATIONS JOINT STAFF PENSION BOARD): ADOPTION

Original Spanish: THE PRESIDENT

We shall now proceed with the adoption of the resolution concerning appointments to the ILO Staff Pension Committee. (United Nations Joint Staff Board). If there are no objections, may I take it that the resolution is adopted?

(The resolution is adopted.)

We have now concluded the consideration of the report submitted by the Finance Committee of Government Representatives. I should like to take this opportunity to thank the Committee, Officers and members, as well as the secretariat and staff, for their good work.

SECOND REPORT OF THE SELECTION COMMITTEE: SUBMISSION, DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL

Original Spanish: THE PRESIDENT

We shall now proceed to the examination of the second report of the Selection Committee, which is published in *Provisional Record* No. 4-2. This refers to the withdrawal of 16 Recommendations, which are considered obsolete. The first report of the Selection Committee, which is published in *Provisional Record* No. 4-1, looked at the generalities pertaining to this. The Officers of the Committee were as follows: the Chairperson and Reporter was Mr. Hasegawa, the Employer Vice-Chairperson was Mr. M'Kaissi and the Worker Vice-Chairperson was Mr. Trotman. I would now like to

call upon Mr. Hasegawa to submit the report of the Selection Committee.

Mr. HASEGAWA (*Government delegate, Japan; Chairperson and Reporter of the Selection Committee*)

It is my honour to submit to you the second report of the Selection Committee.

The Committee met on Tuesday 1 and Thursday 3 June 2004.

At its first meeting it decided, in view of the particularly heavy workload before the plenary of this session, to reconvene for a second sitting to determine item VII on the Conference agenda, the withdrawal of 16 Recommendations.

The Conference, and consequently the Committee, had before it two reports concerning the withdrawal of these instruments, Reports VII(1) and VII(2)

The second report of the Selection Committee, which contains a summary of the discussions of the Committee on this item, was published in *Provisional Record* No. 4-2.

The 16 Recommendations in question have been examined firstly by the Working Party on Policy regarding the Revision of Standards of the Committee on Legal Issues and International Labour Standards of the Governing Body, and then by the Governing Body itself, which decided by consensus at its 277th and 279th Sessions that the Recommendations no longer made a useful contribution to attaining the objectives of the ILO and were, consequently, obsolete.

The constituents were also consulted by questionnaire and, as Report VII(1) shows, there was overwhelming support amongst them for the withdrawals.

I am happy to report that the same spirit of consensus prevailed in the Selection Committee which decided, with a view to modernizing the body of international labour standards, to take the 16 instruments together and endorse the Governing Body's proposal to withdraw all 16 en bloc.

In the light of this report, the Conference may wish to take the required preliminary decision referred to in paragraph 3 of article 45bis of the Standing Orders of the Conference for the withdrawal of the 16 Recommendations.

The Officers of the Committee also wholeheartedly recommend that the Conference approve the results of the final vote, which is to be held tomorrow, Wednesday 16 June, in the morning.

In conclusion, I would like to thank both Vice-Presidents, Mr. M'Kaissi and Mr. Trotman, and the secretariat. With these words I submit the second report of the Selection Committee to the Conference for approval.

Original Spanish: Mr. PRESIDENT

The general discussion on the report of the Selection Committee is now open.

Mr. NOAKES (*Employers' delegate, Australia*)

The Employers' group strongly supports the recommendation contained in the second report of the Selection Committee that the Conference should take the preliminary decision concerning the withdrawal of the 16 Recommendations referred to in the report.

Sir Roy TROTMAN (*Workers' delegate, Barbados; Worker Vice-Chairperson of the Selection Committee*)

Out of an abundance of caution, the Workers wish to make it clear that this was a unanimous decision arrived at earlier by consultations with the Governing Body and we support the decision and urge all workers to support the vote.

Original Spanish: Mr. PRESIDENT

As there are no further speakers, I propose that we proceed to adopt the preliminary decision, referred to in article 45bis, paragraph 3, of the Standing Orders of the Conference, for the withdrawal of the 16 Recommendations that are listed in the document. If there are no objections, may I take it that the preliminary decision is adopted?

(The preliminary decision is adopted.)

The record vote to confirm the withdrawal of all 16 Recommendations together will be held in plenary tomorrow morning.

I propose that we now proceed with the approval of the second report of the Committee as a whole. If there are no objections, may I take it that the report is approved?

(The report is approved.)

I would like to express my thanks to the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of the Committee, the members and, of course, the secretariat for the excellent work that they have achieved.

REPORT OF THE STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE: SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL

Original Spanish: Mr. PRESIDENT

We shall now proceed to the examination of the report of the Standing Orders Committee, which is published in *Provisional Record* No. 16. The Officers of the Committee were as follows: the Chairperson and Reporter was Mr. Oni, the Employer Vice-Chairperson was Ms. Sasso Mazzufferi and the Worker Vice-Chairperson was Ms. Brighi. I would now like to call on Mr. Oni to submit the report of the Standing Orders Committee.

Original French: Mr. ONI (*Government delegate, Benin; Chairperson and Reporter of the Standing Orders Committee*)

It is an honour for me to present to the Conference the report of the Standing Orders Committee which you will find in *Provisional Record* No. 16.

It is proposed that the Conference adopt interim provisions, amending the provisions of the Standing Orders of the Conference regarding the Credentials Committee. These new provisions have been developed at the request of the Credentials Committee itself, so that it may operate more smoothly and efficiently. This matter was dealt with by the Governing Body and the Committee on Legal Issues and International Labour Standards (LILS) during the last three Governing Body sessions and also by the Standing Orders Committee during this session of the Conference.

The main reforms being proposed are the following:

First of all, the mandate of the Credentials Committee is to be broadened. It would, thus, be authorized to examine, not only objections to credentials, but also objections regarding Employers' or Workers' delegates not depositing credentials.

Secondly, the Credentials Committee will, in the future, be able to request that any questions raised in an objection that relate to a breach of freedom of association be referred to the Committee on Freedom of Association.

Finally, if the Conference so decides, the Credentials Committee will be able to ensure the follow-up of its decisions between one session of the Conference and another.

In order to use these last two new powers, a number of procedural guarantees must be fulfilled: the Credentials Committee must be unanimous, and the Conference must make a specific decision.

The interim provisions are also accompanied by a series of practical measures.

As I indicated, these are interim provisions, which would be implemented for a trial period of three years. More specifically, they would come into force at the next session in 2005 and, unless the Conference decides otherwise, they would remain in place until the 96th Session of the ILO Conference in 2007. The Governing Body would then evaluate the system and report back to the Conference in 2008. Nevertheless, the Conference can, of course, modify or cancel measures at any moment, which are not relevant or which turn out to be ineffective.

I am convinced that the proposed reforms will make it possible for the Credentials Committee to operate in a more efficient manner, due to its broadened mandate and strengthened capacity for follow-up and monitoring. May I remind you that the Committee's mandate is mainly to ensure that governments appoint Employers' and Workers' delegations which are as representative as possible of the employers and workers in their countries. The Credentials Committee therefore guarantees true tripartism within our Organization, the tripartism on which the ILO is based and which is its strength.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the two Vice-Chairpersons of the Committee, Ms. Sasso Mazzufferi, and Ms. Brighi, for the spirit of consensus which has characterized our discussions and made it possible for us to discuss calmly the very complex issues we were dealing with. Finally, I would also like to thank the members of the Office of the Legal Adviser for the excellent work they did in preparing this decision.

May I recommend that the Conference adopt this report and the interim provisions which are to be found in the Appendix.

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT

I propose that we proceed with the approval of the report of the Committee, which is contained in paragraphs 1-30 and the Appendix on interim provisions concerning verification of credentials, effective from the 93rd session (June 2005) to the 96th session (June 2007) of the International Labour Conference.

We shall now proceed with the approval of the report of the Committee, paragraphs 1-30. If there are no objections, may I take it that the report, paragraphs 1-30, is approved?

(The report – paragraphs 1-30 – is approved.)

We shall now proceed with the approval of the Appendix to the report. If there are no objections, may I take it that the Appendix of the report is approved?

(The Appendix of the report is approved.)

If there are no objections, may I take it that the report, paragraphs 1-30 and the Appendix, as a whole, is approved?

(The report, as a whole, is approved.)

The amendments contained in the Appendix will be published separately. This will then be added to the publication containing the Constitution of the International Labour Organization and the Standing Orders of the International Labour Conference.

We have now concluded the consideration of the report submitted by the Standing Orders Committee. I should like to take this opportunity to thank the Committee Officers and members as well as the secretariat and staff for their excellent work.

REPORT OF THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE: SUBMISSION, DISCUSSION AND ADOPTION

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT

We shall now proceed to the examination of the report of the Resolutions Committee, which is published in *Provisional Record* No. 18. The Officers of the Committee were as follows: the Chairperson and Reporter was Ms. Santestevan, the Employer Vice-Chairperson was Mr. Botha and the Worker Vice-Chairperson was Mr. Blondel. I would now like to call upon Ms. Santestevan to submit the report of the Resolutions Committee.

Original Spanish: Ms. SANTESTEVAN (Government delegate, Uruguay: Chairperson and Reporter of the Resolutions Committee)

It is for me a proud moment, as well as a challenge and a great responsibility, to take part in this very prestigious meeting.

First and foremost, I should like, on behalf of my country, Uruguay, and in my own capacity, to express my very sincere thanks to all the delegates who have honoured me with this double appointment as Chairperson and Reporter of the Resolutions Committee of this session of the Conference. It is therefore my responsibility to present at this plenary meeting the results of the work carried out by this Committee. It is not easy to summarize in a few minutes the work of a number of days.

Nevertheless, if I had to sum up in a single sentence the most salient characteristic of the work of the Resolutions Committee, I would simply say that it was a real example of social dialogue. As regards the concrete results of our work, it is with pride that I inform you that, after some very intense work, we completed our session by adopting a draft resolution concerning the promotion of gender equality, pay equity and maternity protection.

It is important to underscore here that the Committee had before it 15 draft resolutions which were submitted in accordance with article 17 of the Standing Orders of the Conference, and which meant that subsequently a number of these had to be merged. Furthermore, we had to prioritize the order in which to examine a total of five resolutions using a secret ballot system in accordance with the Standing Orders.

I am pleased to say in this regard that all the delegates of the Committee made every effort to reach a consensus on a highly technical standard. In this context, I would like to express my special thanks to the Vice-Chairpersons of the Committee, Mr. Blondel and Mr. Botha, for the role they played as

spokespersons for the Workers and the Employers, and who demonstrated their vast experience as leaders in the area of negotiation and have shown once again that it is possible to align positions without abandoning the principles which each sector defends.

It is also worth noting that it would have been impossible to carry out any of this work without the constant assistance of the high-level technical team which the ILO made available to the Committee and without the excellent work of the secretariat and the interpreters who made it possible for all the participants to understand each other.

The significance of adopting at this International Labour Conference a resolution concerning the promotion of gender equality, pay equity and maternity protection is unquestionable and I think warrants no further comment.

We know that the increased participation of women in the world of work was perhaps the most significant development of the twentieth century. However, we also know that, even today, in the twenty-first century, women face more difficulties than men when it comes to gaining access to a job, keeping that job and reaching decision-making levels.

Every day we are still packing two days' work into one, because most women shoulder the burden of family responsibilities. We suffer from high levels of unemployment, we are paid lower wages for work of equal value, we are discriminated against because of maternity, and in general we end up in jobs without social security.

Given this reality, we clearly still have a long way to go and the challenge is sizeable. In many cases it entails breaking down cultural barriers, adopting positive action, allocating resources, approving a series of equality plans, in short a change in behaviour encompassing a genuine collective move in favour of equality.

The resolution we are submitting to the Conference today seeks to be a powerful tool for promoting equal treatment and opportunities for women and men and, at the same time, a fundamental instrument for governments, workers and employers when they come to implement action plans to combat discrimination.

Inter alia, the text of the resolution makes it incumbent on all the constituents of the Organization to contribute actively to formulating and putting into practice national policies to foster equality, promoting the setting up of businesses by women, preventing discrimination in recruitment at all levels, eliminating gender-based differences in wages, ensuring a healthy, safe working environment for women and men, promoting measures to reconcile work and family life, developing social security systems which take gender issues into account, mainstreaming gender considerations into labour market regulations and collective agreements and, lastly, promoting opportunities for men and women to participate in work and society on an equal footing.

I therefore invite all delegates to the Conference to adopt the resolution and to commit themselves to returning to their countries with the firm intention of building a society which is more just and fair, because the Committee's work is over, but this just means that a new stage is beginning, that of the actual implementation of the principles contained in this resolution. So this is the challenge before us

and we will be able to achieve the goal we have set ourselves only if each and every one of us makes an effort.

Mr. BOTHA (*Employers' delegate, South Africa; and Employer Vice-Chairperson of the Resolutions Committee*)

We concluded the work of our Committee on Saturday morning and present before you here a resolution that has the full support of the Committee.

Let me return at the end of my remarks to the manner in which this was achieved as I think it was noteworthy.

Employers submitted a draft resolution concerning democratic values, good governance and transparency in a global economy and their impact on the world of work, competitiveness and sustainable development which, while well supported, did not come first or second in the list of preferences. However, good governance remains a major issue for employers. We believe that it has now been identified as one of the key enabling tools in accessing the benefits of globalization.

First and foremost, the resolution we did succeed in drafting on "the promotion of gender equality, pay equity and maternity protection", sends an extremely important message of the importance all the constituents attach to this issue. Employers, in particular, feel strongly about the subject, because quite apart from the need for human decency and respect which we all feel, discrimination in any form also undermines enterprise performance.

Employers worked towards achieving a resolution that dealt with gender discrimination in a meaningful way as an issue of substance. Our attitude in this process was to try to work for a focused resolution on gender discrimination, and in particular equal opportunities for, and equal treatment of, men and women. We sought to achieve a text that was workable, that delivers a clear message and, above all, focuses on women in work. In this I think we were successful.

In addition, let me point out that we sought to devise a text that could be used in a variety of national contexts in a practical way. In this also I believe we were successful.

There are clear messages for governments, employers and workers here. One of the central aspects of this issue that we wanted to see given prominence in the text was the area of women's entrepreneurship. The potential of women entrepreneurs in terms of economic development, employment creation and poverty reduction needs to be tapped. This is, in our view, one aspect of the resolution that we feel can now give a real and tangible outcome from our discussions. We have many examples of the kinds of results that can be achieved by developing responses to encourage and support women's entrepreneurship. Let me also state that the ILO has done some really valuable work in this area, indeed working closely with many of our organizations. We would like to see this work given higher priority.

The Employers' group attaches paramount importance to the issue of education and the resolution clearly flags the importance of it, and in particular the fact that so many young girls are being deprived of this essential building block. To our mind, it is equality in education that needs to be the starting point.

Importantly, this resolution was reached through consensus, looking to accommodate everybody's

perspectives. The work of the Committee was characterized by listening to and acknowledging all points of view and by seeking compromises. There were no votes. I think it is a very important message of a unified voice emerging from our work on this extremely important issue.

It is time for the ILO to make a powerful statement in favour of gender equality, not least because equal opportunities in the world of work is what will eventually have an impact in all other aspects of life. This resolution we believe does that.

I also believe that it is time for all delegations to this session of the International Labour Conference to make a real effort to achieve equal representation here.

The South African Employers' delegation, of which I am a member, will make this an annual objective.

Finally, let me thank my colleague, Mr. Blondel, and the Workers' group, for the cooperative manner in which we worked. Let me also underline again the point that our Committee achieved its work in a truly tripartite fashion. The Government groupings and many individual Government representatives worked tirelessly throughout the week to arrive at a text that everybody could happily support. We thank them too.

Let me also thank Mr. Jean-Michel Servais and his entire team, who worked enormously hard to facilitate a smooth-running Committee. We do appreciate the hidden work that continues long into the nights.

Let me finally thank our Chairperson, Ms. Ana Santestevan, who led this Committee so expertly to the final resolution and who managed the rush towards the end without a stumble. We thank her for her diligence, efficiency, and particularly for her good humour throughout our work.

Original French: Mr. BLONDEL (Workers' delegate, France; Worker Vice-Chairperson of the Resolutions Committee)

Under the chairmanship of Ms. Ana Santestevan, the Government delegate of Uruguay, the Resolutions Committee met regularly and did so relatively effectively.

Once work had been done to combine the 15 draft resolutions that had been approved, eight remained. Through the relevant consultations, they were accorded the following order of priority: the resolution concerning the promotion of gender equality, pay equity and maternity protection; the resolution concerning the ILO's efforts to combat poverty; the resolution concerning the strengthening of the role of the ILO in supporting workers and employers in Palestine and the other occupied Arab territories as a result of continued Israeli occupation and aggressive practices; the resolution concerning democratic values, good governance and transparency in a global economy and their impact on the world of work, competitiveness and sustainable development; and the resolution concerning older workers and employment and social protection. This meant that the responsibility of the Workers was engaged, because the basic structure of the first two draft resolutions emanated from the Workers' group.

Due to lack of time, the Committee only examined the first resolution; the resolution on combating poverty, which came second on the list, was discussed, and I am sure that, given the importance of the issue and the impoverishment, we will return to this matter in future sessions. The enduring na-

ture of this situation, unfortunately, leaves us in no doubt, and – poverty being at the heart of many conflicts – it remains highly relevant. It was with considerable interest and determination that the Committee tackled the first resolution, the title of which, as accepted at the end of the debate, was the Resolution concerning the promotion of gender equality, pay equity and maternity protection.

To tell the truth, our work led us from pay equity to equality generally. It appeared to the participants that although women achieving financial autonomy or even independence was a necessity, it would not be enough to eliminate discrimination between individuals. We also considered the question of property, and the problem of career development to break through the glass ceiling.

Along with the problems inherent with family and maternity, we are aware that in tackling the problem of equality and combating discrimination, we are going against the customs, and the social, the political, cultural and religious practices which stem from a presumption of the superiority of the male sex. It is in this sense that our work is innovative. My colleagues who will also speak about this resolution will talk about the particular points of the resolution submitted for our consideration in terms of where they came from, where they belong, and why they are of interest. I would like to emphasize the responsibilities that are incumbent on the ILO, which are in the preamble to the resolution.

It seems worth recalling the need to promote and give impetus to the ratification of the relevant Conventions in this area, particularly the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), as well as the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156), and the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), which has so far been ratified by eight countries but which should be the subject of growing interest.

Our resolution, which fits into the more general context of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the elimination of discrimination against women and relevant instruments hopes to make the equality of men and women an intersectoral issue, encompassing all the strategic objectives and thus finding a place in the conclusions and recommendations of the report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization.

Coherence is needed at the national and international levels.

This will be possible if the statutory measures taken at the initiative of States, and the complementary measures that the social partners are able to negotiate, serve to strengthen the fight against discrimination.

In my country, the press has just commented on a study that shows that women, after leaving school, sometimes spend several years with practically no professional experience, indicating that even in a country where it is felt that there is respect for equality, there are subtle forms of discrimination. There is also a difference of more than 25 per cent in remuneration for the same level of responsibility and competence.

No country can claim to have solved this problem, as illustrated by the statistics and data analysis in our document. I would like to stress the role of the ILO and the energy that it alone can provide to

achieve these objectives. Our text should not be static; it should stimulate new desires or at least revive them. We have also pointed out that the financial resources required for this purpose would have to be found. As spokesperson of the Workers' group in the Programme, Financial and Administrative Committee of the Governing Body, I shall not forget this commitment.

I would like all the delegates at the 92nd Session of the International Labour Conference to vote in favour of the text that we are submitting to you. This text is the result of a consensus on a very delicate and complex subject. It, of course, goes counter to societal and conservative practices but it can and must enrich the notion of justice and equality amongst all human beings.

Although the majority of the delegates here today are male, I urge you to vote for this resolution and commit yourselves to its implementation, for, as the French poet Aragon said, "woman is the future of man". Let us work together, that she may be the future of society.

It falls to me, in conclusion, to express my warmest congratulations and my thanks to the Chairperson, Ms. Santestevan, who has presided over this Committee with such efficiency and clarity.

Of course, I would also like to congratulate the representatives of the Employers' group – with whom I am starting to feel a definite affinity – as well as all those who took part in the discussions. I would also like to thank Mr. Servais for his administrative services, which have enabled us to work as speedily and as effectively as possible.

Thank you for listening.

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT

The general discussion on the report of the Resolutions Committee is now open

Original French: Ms. RAHMANI (*Workers' delegate, Algeria*)

It is a great honour to have the opportunity of speaking here. I would like to express my satisfaction with regard to the symbiosis that marked the tripartite debate preceding the adoption of the resolution concerning the promotion of gender equality, pay equity and maternity protection.

This confirms the convergence of views between the Workers', Employers' and Government groups when it comes to taking a stand on equality and maternity protection. Once again, persuasion has won through, and I would like to thank them for following our train of thought.

Equality between men and women is one of the cornerstones of democracy and underpins the promotion of decent work and social development, in keeping with the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Fighting inequality must be at the heart of the trade unions' struggle and the guiding principle of our commitment.

I welcome the consensus we have reached, which will enable us to build together coherent strategies to fight discrimination against women, in particular the obstacles facing women in access to positions of responsibility, in the recruitment process and in equality of remuneration. This is the price we have to pay before we can speak of equality of opportunity between men and women.

The ILO and the social partners have an important role to play in achieving the objectives set forth in this resolution. This is a shared victory; let us all act to ensure that these guidelines are translated into

more equality on the ground. What we want is a decent status and genuine promotion of all women in an environment guaranteeing decent work, because defending the right to equality and dignity for working women is the least we can do to ensure respect in terms of human rights.

I therefore urge all of you to vote without reservations for this emancipating document.

Mr. SEN (*Workers' adviser, India*)

To comment on the resolution concerning the promotion of gender equality, pay equity and maternity protection, I would like to note that this resolution attains special relevance in the light of the findings of the report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization and the Director-General's Global Report, *Organizing social justice*.

The World Commission's report diagnoses the current model of globalization as unethical and unfair, so far as its impacts on people and society are concerned. The aggravation of the gender gap and discrimination have been one of the major negative reflections of this impact, leading to the aggravation of poverty, pauperization of people, unemployment, job losses, etc. It must also be noted that, in the global context, the gender-based discrimination which had been gradually declining in the pre-globalization period, particularly since the advent of social welfarism after Second World War, has now been put back on an ascending track by the process of neo-liberal globalization, signalling the degeneration and distortion of social values and civilized cultures.

The neo-liberal economic process throughout the world has led to deepening poverty for the masses, widening the economic disparity between and within countries to an unethical level, thereby also widening gender-based disparity in respect of employment opportunities, earnings, job security, and quality of life for the womenfolk in society. We may note that the existing socio-economic structure breeds discrimination against women in respect of their civil, social, economic and political rights, despite all formal arrangements otherwise. In many societies, women are discriminated against in respect of their rights to property and inheritance.

In developing countries, the situation is even more precarious. Downsizing and privatization of public services are affecting women's employment in a big way. In many industries, especially the mining sector, women workers are being targeted through a separate special voluntary separation scheme in a clandestine manner, leading to a sharp reduction of women workers in these sectors.

In many areas, particularly in the informal sector and sectors such as beedi making, brick kilns, garments, small plantations, farming, construction, etc., women workers are being paid lower wages than their male counterparts for the same and equal value of work.

Women workers are also being subjected to inhuman treatment in respect of maternity protection. Maternity benefits are only available in the organized and formal sectors, and in the informal sector with totally insecure and casual working conditions, women workers are losing livelihood in thousands by becoming pregnant. In the export processing zones, married women are compelled by circumstances to conceal their marital status for fear of losing job opportunities. In fact, a social distortion

is brought about through the virtual denial of maternity rights to women workers in the vast informal sector, in both the unskilled and high-tech categories. In our society, women who are not able to bear children are not looked upon kindly and workplace conditions in many places are acting as a deterrent for women to become mothers. Along with being discriminated against in terms of employment opportunities, wages and other rights, they are also being denied the right of motherhood.

Under the neo-liberal globalization, with the policy of least governance being followed in practice in matters of economic activities and related areas.

In this context a resolution has been proposed to take concrete steps for the effective detection and elimination of gender discrimination. We feel that the eradication of gender discrimination cannot come automatically. The resolution is an action-oriented document which outlines the tasks for concrete action by all the social partners. I hope everyone will endorse it.

Original Spanish: Ms. ANDERSON (Workers' delegate, Mexico)

I would like to say that Latin Americans feel very proud of the President's election.

We women are not unfair competitors competing against men in a world of general rivalry. We are allies and partners in the struggle for fairer societies, for equality in the work place, in education and training, in health and in the legislation in each and everyone of our countries.

Today, the ILO is taking one more step forward in its programme and action in favour of equality for women throughout the world in consolidating at this tripartite forum the resolution concerning the promotion of gender equality, pay equality and maternity protection. This instrument will strengthen gender equality, which is a key element in the programmes and conventions of this Organization which are aimed at generating decent work for both men and women. Therefore, it is necessary for governments, working with employers' and trade union organizations to compile, publish and disseminate, in the most uniform way possible itemized data and gender-based statistics on labour market indicators. They should also promote the spread of good practices in this area. It is necessary to recommend and speed up efforts to achieve genuine equality between men and women, and to offer opportunities at all levels for equality in the world of work, in education, in trade union activities and in professional and business circles.

It is necessary to use genuine social security systems which take account of gender issues, not only in the areas of health and general medicine, but, even more importantly, by paying attention to the maternity needs of working women, to child care, support to working mothers and the right to a fair pension for older women. To promote the mental and physical health of all working women, it is necessary for countries to develop social security systems that take gender issues into account.

Genuine freedom of association cannot exist if there is inequality or discrimination based on race, religion, political opinions or gender, which is, of course, discrimination between men and women.

Therefore, the fundamental rights of the ILO should be implemented in particular the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), and the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Con-

vention, 1958 (No. 111), which protect working women.

Freedom of association cannot be complete without the participation of women in the workers' struggle.

Since it was founded in 1919, the ILO has viewed men and women to be equal in the world of work. Moreover, there are historic photographs in this Organization which show that the founding group contained a number of women from that time; this is a further reason why women should participate more in all the events of the ILO, in particular the annual sessions of the International Labour Conference.

In the year 2003, during the session on gender equality, it was said that at least 30 per cent of delegates should be women. So, I respectfully ask all those in the tripartite system to take into account this very important question of the participation of women at next year's session of the Conference. Likewise, we consider that the ILO should have the opportunity to review its Constitution and alter the language used so as to take account of gender equality.

Not only men but women, joined together in fraternity, will achieve equality in work and fair pay at the same rate as is paid to men.

Mr. RAMPAK (Workers' delegate, Malaysia)

The Workers' group is indeed very happy that this resolution, which constitutes a basis for sustainable development, has received the support of the Resolutions Committee.

The Workers' group has for many years been calling for the full implementation of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda, as this constitutes one of the very foundations of sustainable development as contained in the resolution presented to us this afternoon.

The Workers' group also urges the tripartite dialogue partners to accord due importance to rights-based development, as proposed in this resolution, which refers to the challenges posed by globalization with regard to equality in the world of work.

Maternity protection is provided for in the ILO's Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), as a key component for the empowerment of women workers globally, and particularly in the developing countries where local legislation is inadequate or ineffectively implemented. Women workers in export processing zones, referred to by an earlier speaker, migrant women workers, and those employed in the informal sector in such countries are the most vulnerable and totally lack maternity protection. The Workers' group is urging governments to include in their national strategies measures for protecting workers' lives, the overall quality of life and family life.

To achieve this objective, effective empowerment of women workers, through proactive efforts such as equal remuneration, equal opportunities and maternity protection, is urgently needed. ILO Conventions Nos. 100 and 111 have already laid the foundation for gender and pay equality which should enable working men and women to enjoy the fruits of their labour without discrimination.

In many countries, women workers have been denied their fundamental rights, let alone the right to equality. There are women workers earning only half the wages of male workers for the same type of work, often for longer hours; these women are often exploited physically, mentally and sexually.

Women workers have also been more affected by enterprise downsizing and job-cutting exercises, particularly in the developing countries, where social protection systems are inadequate or totally absent. We call upon governments and employers to recognize women workers as having equal status as partners in progress, and to accord them the recognition and respect that is rightfully theirs for the work they do.

We are pleased that the resolution invites the Governing Body and the ILO, particularly the International Training Centre in Turin, to establish a training programme on gender-neutral job evaluations, intended for governments, and employers' and workers' organizations. This augurs well for the ILO's efforts to establish and reinforce gender-neutral methods of job evaluation and assessment. We believe that the establishment of well-focused training programmes such as this will go far towards promoting gender equality. I can assure the Director of the Centre, Mr. Trémeaud, that we will do everything to ensure that this resolution is implemented at the Turin Centre.

In this context, we also have to consider the funding of the Turin Centre. Less than 10 per cent of its funding comes out of the Regular Budget for Technical Cooperation. Most of its funding is provided by donor countries, in particular, the Italian Government which has given most – not only the premises but much else besides in terms of funding.

That is why we want this programme to be implemented. I urge the Government delegates in this house to support the ILO, and urge the Director-General to allocate more funds so that this resolution can be implemented as the Committee would wish.

Mr. HOWARD (*Workers' delegate, South Africa*)

The resolution that we are presenting to the Conference is a decisive political, economic and industrial intervention. The report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of globalization recognizes the negative effects of globalization on women.

Therefore, apart from the ever-escalating poverty which has been recognized in the reports – particularly in developing countries – and apart from income inequality between developed and developing countries, and within countries, women bear the brunt of poverty and a lack of access to public services and, therefore, this resolution must be seen as a direct intervention against the exploitation and discrimination of women and the forms of poverty they experience.

In my own country, South Africa, our Government has put in place clear legislation, through the Employment Equity Act, to redress rights and gender imbalances in the workplace; this kind of initiative must be taken up by as many governments and employers as possible to give concrete expression to this resolution. As has been mentioned, this is an action-orientated resolution; it is a campaign-driven resolution, and must be treated as such. Similarly, gender mainstreaming must find expression in all the work of the ILO; the struggle for decent work for good wages, minimum wages and living wages, is an integral part of advancing equality, both in the world of work and in civil life.

I fully commend the adoption of this resolution to the Conference as part of the global struggle for a new world order, based on decent work, the eradication of child labour and forced labour, economic growth – which creates employment for the millions of unemployed – the fundamental right to social dialogue and collective bargaining, so that unions truly have the opportunity, in their own societies, in their own national contexts, to promote and campaign for pro-worker, pro-people, a pro-development, a pro-human rights and pro-trade union agenda at all levels, including multilateral institutions such as the World Bank, the IMF and the WTO, for without this the struggle for gender equality, if not located at all of these levels, will not succeed.

This resolution, therefore, is an important tool – as the Chairperson of the Resolutions Committee pointed out in her address – and must be used to achieve those ends.

Original Spanish: Mr. THULLEN (*Government adviser, Ecuador*)

My delegation would not like to miss this opportunity to express its satisfaction with the results achieved by the Resolutions Committee, under the effective and exemplary leadership of its Chairperson, Ana Santestevan. The resolution concerning the promotion of gender equality, pay equity and maternity protection, which the Committee has adopted, is the outcome of a process of intense tripartite consultations which, I dare say, are a milestone in the history of the International Labour Conference. My delegation supports the adoption of this resolution by the Conference.

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT

As there are no further speakers, I propose that we proceed with the approval of the report of the Committee, which is contained in paragraphs 1-213. If there are no objections, may I take it that the report is approved?

(The report – paragraphs 1-213 – is approved.)

**RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE PROMOTION OF
GENDER EQUALITY, PAY EQUITY AND MATERNITY
PROTECTION: ADOPTION**

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT

We shall now proceed with the adoption of the resolution concerning the promotion of gender equality, pay equity and maternity protection. If there are no objections, may I take it that the resolution is adopted?

(The resolution is adopted.)

We have now concluded the consideration of the report submitted by the Resolutions Committee. I should like to take this opportunity to thank the Committee, Officers and members, as well as the Secretariat and the staff, for their excellent work.

We have also now concluded our agenda for this afternoon. Once again, I would like to thank all those concerned for the work they have done and their valuable input and contributions to the different discussions and the decisions that we have taken during this sitting.

(The Conference adjourned at 4.40 p.m.)

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