



## Thirteenth sitting

Tuesday, 14 June 2011, 10.35 a.m.

President: Mr Nkili

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

*Original French: The PRESIDENT*

We will continue our discussion of the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General.

*Original Lao: Mr LASOUKANH (Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, Lao People's Democratic Republic)*

On behalf of the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, I support the Report presented by the Director-General dealing with discrimination.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic is one of the member States which respects the fundamental principles of the International Labour Organization regarding the promotion of social justice and rights for workers.

In addition, we have paid significant attention to implementing our obligations by ratifying nine international labour Conventions, including the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), and others which will be studied and ratified in the future.

The Constitution and law of the Lao People's Democratic Republic contain provisions regarding non-discrimination and the fundamental rights of the Lao population, such as article 35 of the Constitution which states that citizens are equal before the law, irrespective of their gender, social status, education, beliefs and ethnic group.

Article 13 of the Development and Protection Act states that equal rights for women and men means equality in self-development and that they have the same values and opportunities in politics, economics, society, culture and family.

Article 45 of the Labour Code states that employees who perform equal quantity, quality and value of work are entitled to receive equal salary, wages or other benefits without any discrimination as to race, nationality, gender, age, beliefs and socio-economic status.

Regarding employment and jobs, article 15 of the Development and Protection Act stipulates that the State promotes the right of women to engage in production, business and services in accordance with the law.

Women have the right to choose their profession, to choose employment, to be remunerated and to receive other benefits from their work.

In order to promote social justice and narrow the wage gap between male and female workers in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Government considers that the tripartite constituents should identify, monitor and implement activities with regard to minimum wages. The Government encourages the tripartite constituents to play a key role in drafting laws and regulations. Sharing these responsibilities benefits employers, employees and society.

Allow me to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to the International Labour Organization for its support to the Lao People's Democratic Republic in the field of technical and financial endeavours, which contribute to the economic and social development of the country.

*Ms DIMAPILIS-BALDOZ (Secretary of Labor and Employment, Philippines)*

I commend the Director-General for his compelling Report, *A new era of social justice*, which calls for a new era of social justice anchored on sustainable development. Twenty-five years after the People Power Revolution that restored democracy in our country, the Filipino nation, under the leadership of President Benigno S. Aquino III, is constructing a new era of social justice where decent and productive work is the linchpin of inclusive growth.

President Aquino's social contract with the Filipino people, embodied in the Philippine Development Plan 2011–16, envisages inclusive growth that creates local jobs on a wide scale, sustains real economy enterprises, produces decent work outcomes and empowers our people to rise above poverty. It promotes equal gender opportunity, provides responsive social safety nets, encourages the sustainable use of resources, and harnesses tripartism and social dialogue for greater representation and accountability. It is founded on good governance, anti-corruption measures and transparency.

A key element of this Plan is the Philippine Labor and Employment Plan and the Philippine Jobs Pact, our contribution to the ILO Global Jobs Pact.

In pursuit of full employment and decent work, the Plan addresses the jobs and skills mismatch and employability through reforms in the education and training system and strong government–academia–industry tie-ups. It identifies job growth sectors and links short-term income support with improved infrastructure and economic development priorities. A

workable convergence plan and partnership between the Government and the private sector, in particular our social partners, has been firmly established to ensure its successful implementation.

The Plan recognizes sustained increases in labour productivity growth in real economy enterprises as key to poverty reduction and improved living standards. To address decent work deficits in this area, it provides demand-driven skills training programmes, active employment facilitation services, and effective occupational safety and health programmes.

It introduces reforms towards a better Social Protection Floor in the wage-setting system, ensures greater access to social security, provides income support for workers with special concerns and extends enhanced social protection for temporarily laid-off workers, including consideration for unemployment insurance.

The Plan includes measures that protect our migrant workers against risks and a holistic reintegration programme for returnees. We welcome the adoption of the proposed Convention and Recommendation on domestic workers by the committee chaired by the Philippines, affirming our policy of promotion and protection of the rights of Filipino domestic workers everywhere in the world. We expect the Conference to adopt this historic instrument at the plenary and the ILO to initiate action immediately to promote it, with the aim of achieving the widest possible observance and ratification.

The Plan also pushes a legislative agenda to modernize our Labour Code and ensure inclusive sectoral representation in policy- and decision-making bodies in Government. It promotes better compliance with labour standards through tripartite social audits and encourages mutually agreed employment relations to balance workers' rights under ratified labour Conventions and our Constitution, with business competitiveness. It adopts labour market governance to protect public interest and dispense labour justice through an efficient and credible dispute settlement system.

We have effectively used tripartism and social dialogue at the national and local levels to forge social consensus and achieve greater policy coherence and effective programme implementation. Various reforms under the Plan are seeing concrete results, receiving commendations from the social partners and our public.

Indeed, a new era of social justice and sustainable development requires a strong public-private partnership in many areas across and beyond national borders. These include institutional capacity building and information sharing, in particular on the supply and demand of labour. Our human capital must be our shared resource and must be nurtured, protected and guaranteed access to better employment opportunities anywhere. Let us continue working together to minimize risks and vulnerabilities in the world of work for growth and sustainable development.

Finally, we value the continuing support of the ILO for our development agenda, which represents the Philippines' contribution to the crafting of a new era of social justice and sustainable development and reaffirms our commitment to the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization.

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Ms NGUYEN THI KIM (*Minister for Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, Viet Nam*)

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We share the belief that this 100th Session of the International Labour Conference will mark an important milestone in the "new era of development and social justice" in the Organization's 90-year-old history, reaffirming its mission and position in the international arena.

Our Conference is taking place as the world has overcome the most difficult period of the global economic crisis, and is continuing to recover. Yet, the speed of recovery differs from country to country and region to region. Concerns remain over the sustainability of global recovery, particularly in relation to job creation, employment and income security for workers. Natural calamities and ongoing political instability and conflicts are damaging the socio-economic gains in many countries, in particular poverty reduction efforts. The recurrence of energy and food crises is having a direct impact on the livelihood of workers, especially the poor.

In this context, it is highly relevant for this Conference to discuss the issues of social security and protection of vulnerable workers, and to explore ways to promote social dialogue to jointly find solutions for pressing national and international matters.

The Government of Viet Nam places employment and social protection at the core of its socio-economic development programmes and policies. Indeed, employment and social protection objectives are clearly defined in the recently adopted Socio-economic Development Strategy 2011–20. They are closely linked to the goals set for the strengthening of the labour market and human resource and skills development. They are expected to help promote national competitiveness and sustainable development.

To achieve those objectives, Viet Nam needs to take a comprehensive set of measures, with particular focus on the following.

First, it needs to revise the Labour Code and develop the Employment Law and Minimum Wage Act to further strengthen the legal framework for the effective management of the labour market, capacity building and promotion of social dialogue. This will help ensure greater access to more and better employment and to basic social protection. The aim also is to progress towards international labour standards.

Second, it must build capacity for labour management at both national and subnational levels by strengthening labour market forecasting, employment services and labour inspection. It is also essential to implement the vocational training programme for rural workers and programmes on employment for youth, women, people with disabilities and people living in poor and ethnic minority areas.

Third, it should continue to build a comprehensive social protection system and give priority to social protection goals with the understanding that economic development must be closely linked with social welfare and justice. Viet Nam is actively considering joining the United Nations Social Protection Floor initiated by the ILO and WHO. Most recently, the Government issued a resolution on sustainable, comprehensive and inclusive poverty reduction covering the period 2011–20.

Fourth, it must actively consider the further ratification of a number of ILO Conventions, including the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957

(No. 105); the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122); and the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187).

Viet Nam supports efforts by the ILO to adopt a new legal instrument on the protection of domestic workers. We also second proposals to extend the coverage and level of social insurance in line with the Social Protection Floor.

The recent Party Congress reaffirmed Viet Nam's consistent policy of comprehensive international integration.

Viet Nam is currently one of the eight countries to first pilot the United Nations "Delivering as One" initiative with encouraging results. Viet Nam has proven to be an important member of ASEAN and a responsible member of a number of regional and international organizations, including the United Nations, the ILO, APEC and ASEM.

I take this opportunity to express our thanks for having elected Viet Nam as a titular member of the Governing Body, and we shall do our level best to contribute to its work, including its continued reforms as proposed by the Director-General and endorsed by our Conference.

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*Original Russian: Mr SHOKHIN (Employer, Russian Federation)*

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The 100th Session of the International Labour Conference is being held at a time of unstable economic recovery from the crisis. Countries and the world community are looking for new approaches to achieving sustainable growth and progressive social development. We warmly welcome the Report of the Director-General, which sets out his views of the challenges of our time.

In Russia, the crisis is over, but we have not yet moved into a phase of sustainable economic growth. The challenge is to ensure that government authorities and the social partners work together to speed up this transition to sustainable growth.

We believe that is essential to regenerate employment and create new jobs that provide decent work. Our assumption in this is that the best guarantee of employment is a free and competitive market economy that creates high-quality jobs.

The Russian economy does not yet have enough incentives to create more jobs and move away from technologically outdated, low-paid jobs with poor working conditions.

To provide greater stimuli for that process, we believe it is important to focus on certain key areas. Firstly, we should allow the State to play a more effective role in the economy in areas where its positive regulatory effect is fully justified.

Secondly, the role of the State in the economy may be reduced in other ways. In particular, we believe it is very important to reduce state interference with competition through micromanagement and to adopt universal measures to support business activities. It is essential to reduce the excessive level of state ownership and move towards an exit strategy through widespread privatization of assets including those taken into state ownership during the crisis. Revenue from privatization, we believe, should not be used to cover the current budget deficit but instead invested in solving strategic economic and social problems, including the replenishment of the national welfare fund.

Thirdly, we must reduce taxes on new business and on procurement of new equipment, on condition

that it must have been manufactured less than one year ago. There is no sense in taxing jobs that have not yet been created or using taxation in a way that holds back high-quality job creation.

These and other measures should strengthen the ability of enterprises to adapt to new market conditions and improve their readiness to face economic and technological transitions. Jobs are inevitably changing and new jobs are being created, requiring from workers the ability to adapt and learn new skills.

Fourthly, we need to reduce pension and social insurance contributions by building more effective models for these systems. Russia has gone down the path of increasing social insurance contributions at a time when the negative impact of the crisis is still being felt. As a result, we have come up against a flight of jobs and wages from the formal sector to the so-called "grey zone", an increase in informal employment relationships, and reduced investment in the regeneration of manufacturing and jobs.

The fifth measure: we need to implement reforms to the system of occupational safety and health and improve labour legislation. Regeneration in this area should ensure greater flexibility in the market and change notional protective measures into measures that really work. We do not doubt that these changes will be based on international labour standards and the ILO concept of decent work. We also intend to make use of the experiences of the European Union as reflected in its various directives and regulations on issues of employment, labour relations and occupational safety and health.

We also need to tackle other, no less important challenges. In particular we need to regenerate our system of training high-quality workers, to make it more responsive to the requirements of the economy, labour market and the workers themselves. We need to reform and update our national system of qualification and certification of qualified personnel.

The ILO is the sole international organization within the United Nations system to specialize in labour issues. Its tripartite composition gives us the opportunity to develop a balanced approach to labour policy, based on sustainable development of enterprises. This is the unique feature that we need to strengthen. Since economic and social development are indivisible, we must ensure better coordination between the ILO and other international organizations, both economic and financial. And we need to spread the best practices of ILO member States in implementing post-crisis strategies.

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*Original Arabic: Mr Hilale (Government, Morocco)*

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I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Director-General of the International Labour Organization, Mr Juan Somavia, and all his staff for their efforts to ensure the success of this session.

Since its foundation, the ILO has kept pace with the global economic and social situation by proposing measures and strategies to address the negative effects on labour and the advancement of industrial relations. In this regard, the adoption of an international labour Convention and Recommendation would establish a protective framework for domestic workers to guarantee their economic and social rights and to reduce the informal economy.

In harmony with these normative developments, Morocco, following broad consultations with the social partners, is going to adopt legislation on the

protection of domestic workers, which is expected to strengthen our national legislation so as to bring it into conformity with the requirements of the new proposed instruments submitted to our Conference for adoption, which Morocco supports.

Since its foundation, the ILO has advocated the social aspects of development. Accordingly, it has taken a bold approach to globalization, putting forward proposals aimed at ensuring that it has a social and human dimension.

The Report of the Director-General, after examining the situation with regard to social justice, which has been affected by unfair and unbalanced globalization, proposes “a new era of social justice” opening up a new vision of sustainable development through a shift to a new production model.

Discrimination in the full sense of the word, which entails violation of the principle of equal opportunities between individuals and the sexes, affects human dignity. Aware of the importance of the principle of equality adopted by the ILO in the 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, since 2006 the Kingdom of Morocco has adopted a national strategy for gender equality and mainstreaming gender in development policies and programmes. In 2010, the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training lay down an ambitious plan for mainstreaming gender in training, employment and social protection for 2011–14.

As the Kingdom of Morocco believes in the importance of consolidating the democratic gains over the past years in regard to development, participation and human rights, His Majesty King Mohammed VI, in his speech to the nation on 9 March 2011, announced sweeping reforms of the Constitution in order to ensure the pluralism of the Moroccan identity and strengthen the powers of the constitutional institutions, Government and Parliament, broaden individual and collective freedoms, strengthen every aspect of human rights – political, economic, social, developmental, cultural and environmental – and consolidate the principle of separation of powers and the balance of powers, grant local elected councils broad decision-making and executive powers, and strengthen good governance.

This reform was carried out with the enthusiastic involvement of all the political parties, trade unions and human rights, youth and civil society organizations through broad national dialogue and the submission of proposals, contributing to a constitutional text which meets the aspirations of Morocco to build a modern democratic State. The reform is expected to be accepted by the people in a referendum to be held in July this year.

This year saw the establishment of the Economic and Social Council, which includes representatives of the most representative trade unions and employers’ associations, civil society organizations and independent personalities. The Council was assigned the task of drawing up a social pact, following up national and local economic, social and environmental policies and making proposals on them.

In order to strengthen human rights in our country, and to meet Morocco’s national and international commitments, the Consultative Council on Human Rights has been replaced by the National Council on Human Rights, which has decision-making powers in regard to supervising the protection and observance of citizens’ individual and collective human rights and freedoms, as well as moni-

toring the situation in regard to such rights at the national and local levels.

In order to guarantee good governance, the institution for mediation between management and users has been strengthened with a view to ensuring the rule of law and disseminating the principles of justice, equity and transparency in the administration of public utilities.

In the field of social protection, the Moroccan system has developed considerably since it was adopted in 1959, and has been gradually extended to cover all categories of workers; it now covers self-employed workers, and it is planned to improve it through the adoption of an unemployment benefit.

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Mr SUBRAMANIAM (*Minister of Human Resources, Malaysia*)

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The Global Report has provided an overview of worldwide trends regarding discrimination in employment and occupation. It highlights both positive and negative aspects to be considered by member States.

The Malaysian Government has embarked on numerous new initiatives to address recent economic challenges to ensure Malaysia’s continuous growth and competitiveness. We have announced a new economic model based on the principles of high income, inclusiveness and sustainability to meet these new challenges.

My Ministry is in the process of formulating new strategies and programmes to address present and future problems.

An act enabling the Government to intervene in wage-fixing mechanisms will be tabled in Parliament soon. We are reviewing other items of labour-related legislation to ensure their relevance and appropriateness for present times. My Government pays close attention to labour issues and is very active in promoting decent work.

Foreign workers, who constitute about 15 per cent of the total workforce, are allowed in selected fields and enjoy full protection under Malaysian law.

In our desire to transform to a high income-based and high skill-based economy, our Government has embarked on a major programme to increase the percentage of the skilled workforce in the country from 28 per cent at the present time to 50 per cent by 2020. To achieve this, we have been putting great emphasis on skills training. Improving and mainstreaming vocational education will involve efforts to upgrade training institutes, promote greater involvement of industry in skills training, and strengthen the capacity of vocational trainers.

Social security for workers has been enforced since the 1970s after the implementation of the Malaysian Employees’ Social Security Act. Recently, the Malaysian Social Security Organization has actively promoted a “Return to Work Programme” which is aimed at promoting productive welfare amongst disabled contributors to the scheme. The Social Security Organization is actively working with other related agencies to promote productive welfare amongst Malaysians. This includes better jobs for the disabled, vocational training and reskilling for the injured and continued employment for older persons in the post-employment period. This will set the future direction of the organization, which will not only provide compensation and assistance for the disabled, sick and elderly but will also continue to promote more innovative ways to ensure the productivity and continuous employment of these groups.

The effect of globalization in new patterns of labour force utilization is posing major challenges to the time-tested methods of labour administration and labour inspection. There is now a dire need for us to reform our systems of labour administration and labour inspection to ensure their effectiveness and relevance. Innovative methodologies and a greater use of information technology have to be incorporated into labour administration and labour inspection to ensure their relevance to present times. In this light the ILO's initiative to strengthen these mechanisms in the member countries is laudable. Such assistance should take into consideration the different levels of economic development, labour market mobility and the levels of maturity in labour management systems. Malaysia, for its part, organized a training workshop on building modern and effective labour administration and inspection systems to meet future challenges with the assistance of the ILO.

I would like to congratulate the ILO on its initiatives to promote the principles of decent work for domestic workers. Malaysia has long been host to foreign domestic workers. We have at present about 280,000 foreign domestic workers, mainly from Indonesia. Recently, the Malaysian and Indonesian Governments signed a Memorandum of Understanding to improve the recruitment and employment conditions of these workers.

Among the areas in which understanding has been reached are the granting of a weekly rest day, recognition of the rights of domestic workers to hold their own passports, and a mandatory requirement to deposit workers' wages in their own bank accounts. Suggestions have also been made to reduce the fees of recruitment agencies. Both countries have also agreed to set up a joint task force to implement the spirit of this understanding and to address and resolve any issues that might so arise.

In addressing the issues faced by domestic workers, it is important to look into all the processes involved, starting with the pre-recruitment initiatives and including the recruitment processes and the management of workers' welfare in the post-recruitment period. Many of the problems faced by domestic workers start even before they arrive at the country of employment. Multiple layers of people involved in the pre-recruitment processes, each imposing their demands on the domestic workers, and complicated processes make the domestic workers very vulnerable. They thus become indebted prior to coming to the country of work and this, in fact, is the beginning of all their problems. Any attempt to improve the conditions of decent work for domestic workers has to take into consideration these issues and has to be holistic, relevant and enforceable in all member States.

As a global community, we will work together to improve conditions of work for all workers in this country and throughout the world.

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*Original Japanese: Ms KOMIYAMA (Senior Vice-Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare, Japan)*

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It is a great honour to be granted this opportunity to speak at the 100th Session of the International Labour Conference, on behalf of the Government of Japan.

First of all, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all of the constituents, international organizations – including the ILO, and countless numbers of people who have expressed their sup-

port and condolences for Japan since the tragic earthquake and tsunami on 11 March 2011. Three months on from the disaster, thanks to your generous support, the area has entered into the recovery stage, involving, for example, the construction of temporary housing, and is heading towards revival. Japan, including the majority of the country that was unaffected by the disaster, as well as the damaged areas, is united in its desire to promote recovery and revival.

The recovery of the labour market plays a key role in efforts to revive the affected areas. As the person in charge of employment assistance and job creation for those affected by the disaster, I immediately arranged, and have been implementing, a variety of measures, such as the creation of employment opportunities through reconstruction projects, subsidies for businesses employing those affected by the disaster, maintaining employment in the disaster areas and reconstruction assistance for all small and medium-sized enterprises.

In promoting these measures, it is especially important to ensure that people are well matched to jobs. In this regard, I would like to stress that Japan's Public Employment Services nationwide network is playing an effective role.

After the very serious incident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station of the Tokyo Electric Power Company, the Government of Japan has been making every effort to ensure that the situation is resolved as quickly as possible. In the meantime, we also recognize that we cannot neglect the health of the employees working at the critical sites. The Government has been conducting extensive health checks and controls of radiation doses, strengthening measures to protect against heatstroke in the summertime, and implementing measures to protect the mental health of workers who are exposed to long-term cumulative mental and physical stress. Furthermore, we are developing a database to facilitate the long-term health management of workers involved in the recovery efforts, extending beyond the completion of those works. We are determined to take all possible measures to protect workers.

The situation in the area devastated by the earthquakes and the tsunami has once again reminded us of the principles of social security. We have seen survivors of the disaster helping one another, and volunteers from all over the country offering their support. I believe that this "mutual aid" is the original form of social security.

Japan is currently considering a joint reform of the social security and tax systems. I am confident that strengthening the social security system, and supporting children and child-rearing, represents "investing in our future". I think this view is shared by the ILO's concept of social protection, which emphasizes "investment in people", such as vocational training and education, and social protection.

One of the features of the ongoing reform of the social security system is the adoption of employment promotion in parallel with social security for the elderly and children. This aims to make our society a place in which all people can participate through employment. Through these efforts, a vital society can be created, in which people can live without anxiety for their future, overcoming the expected reduction of the labour force.

The key elements for creating such a society are: women, young people and vocational training. As there are many women who stop working following

childbirth, a phenomenon referred to as the “m-shaped curve” still persists in Japan. Therefore, we promote both a work–life balance, to limit long working hours, and support for child-rearing, such as pre-school assistance.

For young people, we give high priority to enhancing career education and vocational education in schools, and the improvement of the system which helps non-regular young workers to develop their careers.

With regard to vocational training, a law was recently enacted which provides for the establishment of a system to help jobseekers by providing free vocational training and financial assistance during the training period. Through this system, we will strengthen the employment safety net.

At the International Labour Conference last year, we mentioned that the Government was considering reinstating the basic labour rights of public service employees. This April, the Government of Japan drew up a plan for reforming the national civil service system, which includes granting national public service employees in the non-operational sector the right to conclude collective agreements and submitted the relevant bills to the Diet this month. With regard to the Right to Organize of Fire Defence Personnel, the committee established within the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications filed its report in December 2010. We are moving towards granting these rights and will continue our examination of the matter, as necessary.

Finally, the impact of the disaster which hit Japan this year has been tremendous, but we can also view this hardship as an opportunity to create an even better, and more vital, country in the future. Even though the ILO Asia and the Pacific Regional Meeting, scheduled in Kyoto this April, was postponed as a result of the earthquake and tsunami, we think that there is an opportunity for Japan, the ILO and the countries in the region to take up the challenge of realizing decent work in that region. Therefore, we will continue to make our contribution as a host country, to the best of our ability. I hope that hosting the meeting in Japan will provide a strong impetus towards recovery.

I would like to conclude my remarks by expressing my wish to see you in Kyoto in December.

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*Original Portuguese: Ms ANDRE (Minister of Labour and Social Solidarity, Portugal)*

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Over the last few decades we have witnessed a worsening of economic and social imbalances and inequality across the globe. This trend is the result of an unbalanced model of economic globalization and growth which generates greater inequality.

The Director-General’s Report, which I thank him for, analyses, in a realistic way, the current situation. We have seen that this model has actually aggravated existing labour market issues:

- unequal distribution of income, with the proportion of low-paid jobs on the increase;
- continued wage inequality between men and women;
- increased productivity which is not reflected in wages;
- a rise in precarious work and informal employment;
- increased unemployment and underemployment, above all among youth;
- rural flight and growth in the informal urban economy.

In the last few years, we have seen the bankruptcy of the neo-liberal economic model, a model which promised that economic growth would automatically create more and better jobs and ensure higher incomes, on the condition that state intervention in the functioning of the markets was minimal. This theory led to unsustainable growth, greater inequality and reduced social progress in many countries.

We must learn lessons from the consequences of the global crisis. We can only conclude that the difficulties facing many countries and regions, including Portugal, will only be resolved if we bear in mind the solid values and principles that are at the heart of the work of the International Labour Organization.

Employment must remain central in terms of our priorities and actions. Employment is a universal right and full employment must continue to be a priority public policy objective, even if a given economic situation leads to high unemployment.

We must continue to improve the levels of education and training among the active and inactive populations, thus promoting employability, innovation, employment-creation and the restructuring of the economy and enterprises in order to promote activities with increased added value.

Employment must be decent and accompanied by rights. The labour markets must respect equality and the fundamental principles and rights at work proclaimed by the ILO.

The issues of freedom of association and collective bargaining are vital principles which enterprises, the social partners, States and international institutions must promote, implement, respect and ensure respect for in all circumstances.

Today, more than ever, policies at the international, national and multinational levels need to be coherent and coordinated. Employment accompanied by rights must be a constant goal and we therefore believe that the ILO must play an active role, intervening to ensure that international trade and investment agreements contain regulations concerning labour rights. The efforts of the ILO and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to define new guidelines for intervention, under which employment with rights, social protection and the social dialogue are accorded greater significance, must be continued and strengthened on a mutual basis.

Portugal supports the three fundamental issues under discussion at this Conference: reaction to the global dimension of domestic work, a field in which regulation is often minimal; support for the role of labour administrations and inspectorates; and promotion of the strategic objectives of social security as a factor promoting social justice and a fairer globalization.

In this regard, we must take into account the situation in each country and region. We cannot come up with a one-size-fits-all solution. However, we should not forget that only 20 per cent of the world’s population currently enjoys adequate social protection and this is an issue with regard to which we expect this International Labour Conference to make a contribution.

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*Ms LARSEN (State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway)*

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We are gathered here at this 100th Session of the International Labour Conference, under the slogan “A new era of social justice”. This is a call and an objective which Norway strongly supports. I believe

that achieving it rests on three important premises: the first, sustainable growth, respecting principles and rights at work; the second, gender equality; and the third, coherence within the international system.

Let me start with the first. We need growth and policies that create jobs respecting basic labour rights. Decent work is absolutely fundamental to sustainable and fair economic growth. The renewed growth after the financial crisis has, to a large extent, been jobless growth. This will not lead us in the right direction. We must combat unemployment. We need a strong, skilled labour force to provide services, create business and develop strong economies and democracies. No country can afford low levels of employment, protection and services. Therefore, in all countries, governments and social partners must cooperate and take responsibility for making the necessary political decisions to turn this around.

A comprehensive labour market policy is crucial: a policy developed in line with international standards, based on experience and needs, and linked to policies on education, family and social protection. It is also necessary to build strong, legitimate institutions that serve the needs of the population. Collective bargaining and independent trade unions and employers' organizations are fundamental, as is fighting and preventing corruption.

We are witnessing a major transformation in the Middle East and North Africa. I would like to commend the ILO for its swift responses to calls for assistance from constituents in the region. Just a few weeks ago, I participated with the ILO in the first annual meeting of the "Just Jobs Network" of think tanks, in Cairo. Being there brought home the urgency and importance of this agenda, and this urgency and importance is the reason why Norway has made decent work a priority in its foreign policy. We have done so because we consider it to be fundamental to a real democratic society, but we also have our own national experience.

Norway, emerging as one of Europe's poorest states at the beginning of the twentieth century, did not make one giant leap to where we are today. A basic agreement between workers and employers was negotiated in the 1930s, a time of great social unrest and economic hardship, and it is still the basis for tripartism in Norway. Social dialogue, independent unions and employers' organizations, and gender equality are the backbone of the social and economic development we have seen since, and that brings me to the second premise: gender equality.

Let me be clear on this. Gender equality is not only right in a legal and moral sense, it makes perfect economic sense. There can be no fair globalization, sustainable growth or new era for social justice without independence, participation and opportunities for women and girls. Women's rights and gender equality must be at the heart of our Decent Work Agenda and efforts for social justice. Work to improve the situation of women in the labour market must continue to be strengthened, not undermined, during transition and recovery. I would also like to emphasize the important role of UN Women and the need for strong cooperation with the ILO. We are happy to see that such strong cooperation has been well established.

Let me come to the last premise: coherence. Coherence is a key issue for Norway. The global economic crisis has made the Decent Work Agenda and greater coherency even more important. Norway

has adopted a seven-point government strategy for the promotion of decent work and workers' rights. The strategy is aimed at integrating decent work into foreign development and trade policies, and achieving greater coherence in policies at home and within international institutions.

We call for greater coherence in the international system. The ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization represented a breakthrough for coherence in global governance. It puts social justice on a par with economic efficiency and growth. The Declaration and the Decent Work Agenda have proved to be powerful tools for coherence. This has been shown through the ILO's role and policies in the international system in recent years.

We commend and support the active approach pursued by the Director-General in order to ensure that the ILO is highly relevant in the international system. The Director-General said in his opening speech that, through leadership, knowledge, dialogue and cooperation, we can create a new era for social justice. By focusing on employment, gender equality and coherence, we can begin to achieve our common goal. Norway is committed to this, and I hope that, with this 100th Session of the Conference, the new era will begin.

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Ms BUTLER-TURNER (*Government, Bahamas*)

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On behalf of the people and the Government of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, I would like to congratulate the President and the Vice-Presidents on their election to preside over this session of the International Labour Conference. It is my esteemed honour to speak on behalf of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas in the context of the Director-General's Report and my country's progress.

In his Report, the Director-General uses such an interesting phrase that I had to incorporate it into today's remarks. He said, "It looks like some financial institutions are 'too big to fail' while many people are 'too small to matter'". If we consider the population within the Caribbean it becomes apparent that entire countries would be considered too small to matter. I would ask those of you who represent countries with more developed economies to realize that as the world recovers from the global recession, none of us can afford to tread such a dangerous path again.

The Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development states, "We share the conviction that social development and social justice are indispensable for the achievement and maintenance of peace and security within and among our nations". The need to avoid the social disruption, economic exclusion and brain drain caused by migrations that are the result of recessions is great. It is my opinion that the long-term effects of the recession have yet to be known or fully theorized. Taking all of this into account, I suggest that nations both great and small begin to more fully study and then implement a number of the ILO's programmes.

For its part, the Bahamas has followed a number of the ILO's guidelines in creating our national budget since the fiscal year 2009–10. We are of the view that this has helped to ameliorate some of the worst effects of the global recession. The Government's actions included: stimulus measures to generate employment; public spending on infrastructure to create jobs; and supporting small and medium-sized enterprises as important job creators. In an effort to avoid what is termed by the ILO a "social



recession”, we did not cut social programmes; that contributed to the overall well-being of our society.

We believe that we have begun to see a glimmer of hope on the economic horizon. As the world recovers from the recession we expect that the number of unemployed will be reduced as more jobs will be created. However, we are fully aware that the job market is changing. This will mean that many of our workers will need to be retrained or become entrepreneurs. In our national budget for 2011–12, we have allocated funds for a number of programmes that will help with the full recovery and will result in a more productive and efficient workforce. In the upcoming budget year, which begins in July, our Government will institute a national Job Readiness and Training Programme. The aim of this programme is as follows: firstly, it will target 1,000 young Bahamians, who will have their job readiness enhanced through training. Secondly, it will retrain 1,000 mature workers for jobs in new fields or will upgrade their skills for employment in areas with which they are familiar. Thirdly, it will create apprenticeships in both basic and advanced technical fields for another 1,000 workers.

The national Job Readiness and Training Programme will be developed in conjunction with the private sector. In total, US\$25 million have been allocated to the aforementioned training programmes, which represents a hundredfold increase in the amount spent on training the unemployed. The Government also realizes that while helping people to become employees is good, it is even better to make them employers, so we have allocated US\$1.5 million to an entrepreneurial programme. This programme provides grants of up to US\$7,500 to persons over the age of 30 years who wish to start a business.

Over the past three years, the Bahamas has implemented a number of social programmes in keeping with the best practices of the ILO. None of this would have been possible without the full involvement of our social partners. We are grateful to our unions, employers, churches and all the other sectors. We encourage other countries to participate in the very same tripartite negotiations.

Like many countries, the Bahamas expects that the road to recovery will be an arduous one, and I believe that we must begin to put in place those things that will prevent a recurrence of the global recession.

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Mr DAIPi (Government, Singapore)

When we last gathered here in 2010, the world was just recovering from the global economic recession. Today, economic conditions, especially over much of Asia, are on a firmer footing. Riding partly on this, and on downturn measures formulated by the Government together with our tripartite partners, Singapore has recovered quickly. Its gross domestic product (GDP) grew by a record 14.5 per cent in 2010, and is expected to grow by 5–7 per cent this year. Preliminary estimates put the unemployment rate at 1.9 per cent as at March 2011.

Going forward, Singapore is repositioning its economic strategy to better achieve inclusive and sustainable growth, so that its workers can enjoy the full fruits of economic progress. A key thrust is to raise productivity and nurture a culture of lifelong learning in its workforce and enterprises. We are investing US\$2 billion to enhance our Continuing Education and Training system over the next few

years. Social protection will continue to be important to inclusive growth.

To address the employment and income security needs of our ageing workforce, Singapore will implement a re-employment law in 2012. Employers will be required to employ eligible older employees from the age of 62, which is the minimum retirement age, to the age of 65. This will create more opportunities for our older workers to work longer and save more for retirement. Even as youth employment becomes an important part of the agenda going forward, we call on the ILO not to forget other vulnerable groups in the workforce, such as older workers.

Over the last few years, Singapore has represented the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as a titular member of the ILO Governing Body. We worked with the ILO to further strengthen ASEAN–ILO collaboration in enhancing labour practices and the overall well-being of workers. Singapore would like to express its heartfelt appreciation to its colleagues, especially its ASEAN friends, for the strong support extended to it.

We would like to congratulate Viet Nam, as the newly elected ASEAN titular member of the ILO Governing Body, as well as the newly elected deputy members – Cambodia, Thailand and Indonesia.

Singapore’s titular membership term has been a fruitful one. We benefited from the ILO’s support and expertise, and from sharing experiences with other member States.

Last month, at the invitation of the ILO and the Barbados Government and social partners, a tripartite delegation from Singapore attended a tripartite Caribbean symposium in Barbados to share experiences in the area of tripartism and social dialogue and productivity, and learn from its Caribbean counterparts. Singapore also demonstrated its commitment to tripartism by ratifying the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144), in 2010.

This year, I am pleased to announce that Singapore, with the full support of our tripartite partners, will ratify the ILO’s Maritime Labour Convention, 2006. I understand that we are the first Asian country to ratify the Convention. This is a significant step for Singapore as we commit to applying the provisions of the Convention to Singapore-flagged ships so as to achieve decent work for seafarers.

I am also pleased to announce that the Singapore Ministry of Manpower will be signing a partnership agreement with the ILO to develop and implement a joint cooperation programme in progressive labour and workplace practices in the ASEAN region. The agreement will help strengthen the cooperation between the ILO and Singapore in helping to enhance human resources management and development in the region.

In closing, I wish to commend the ILO on its sustained response to the challenges brought about by the global economic crisis and the difficult employment issues arising from the recovery.

I am confident that, under the able leadership of the President, the 100th Session of the International Labour Conference will be a success.

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Mr KYI (Union Minister of Labour, Union Minister of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Myanmar)

The Director-General, in his Report, rightly highlights aspects on social justice that are of interest to all workers around the world. In this context, I



would like to echo that social protection is a necessity for a sustainable society. It also constitutes an important investment in human resource development, particularly of workers.

We believe that effective delivery of social security benefits is crucial in promoting a productive workforce, gender equality and sound economic growth and in reducing poverty. Myanmar's social security scheme, drawn up with the technical assistance of the ILO, has been providing social protection to Myanmar workers since 1954. However, today's needs call for a new scheme to enhance the benefits and social coverage of workers. The Government is drafting a new social security scheme, as well as a new law on employment and skills training to create more job opportunities and reduce poverty.

Allow me very briefly to give you an update on recent developments in Myanmar. As you may be aware, multiparty elections were held in November last year. Consequently, the democratization process has begun. The Union Government, which was approved by our Parliament and the new Government members took an oath of office on 30 March 2011.

On the same day, the President of the Union delivered an inaugural speech in Parliament, in which he touched on social protection for workers and peasants as follows: "We are also determined to improve the living conditions of peasants and workers. We will occasionally update the laws to safeguard the rights of peasants. We will step up tasks for agricultural development, ensuring reasonable prices of agricultural products, and improving the quality of agricultural products. In particular, we will create employment opportunities, stabilize commodity prices and encourage welfare and social security for the convenience of workers and labourers, and we will ensure that minimum pay scales meet current living costs. We guarantee that national workers, inside and outside the country, will enjoy all rights. Peasants and workers are the major class of the nation, so our Government guarantees that they can enjoy the benefits derived from their labour in proportion to their contribution, as well as social security."

I would like to stress that the message from our President's speech places high priority on the social security of workers and encompasses development and environmental management in the interest and welfare of present and future generations.

Poverty reduction is one of the highest priorities of the new Government. The Government is conducting seminars and drafting action plans with the purpose of reducing poverty and implementing the development of rural areas effectively and speedily. These activities are being carried out in cooperation and collaboration with communities and organizations that have a genuine desire for the development of the nation.

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Mr SIELE (*Minister of Labour and Home Affairs, Botswana*)

I wish to take the opportunity to thank the members for their support in the elections for the Governing Body, in which Botswana will serve as a deputy member for the period 2011–14.

Having been part of the ILO family for some time now, I can vouch for the ILO's conviction on a fairer and more sustainable future for all. I have also been here long enough to witness its commitment to the promotion of inclusive growth, peace, equity,

rights, stable development in economies, enterprises and workplaces, and poverty reduction.

Although the past has been fraught with a lot of challenges, a lot has been achieved by this Organization. The ILO has played a key role in promoting more balanced and sustainable growth, a better balance between wages and productivity, the recognition of the key role played by collective bargaining and rights at work, and the right set-up of employment-generating macroeconomic policies. In this endeavour, the ILO has been guided by the Decent Work Agenda, the Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, the Global Jobs Pact and up-to-date international labour standards.

On the domestic front, we have witnessed tremendous progress in the development of the labour administration system. We have been able to review labour laws and policies, taking the needs and interests of workers, employers and Government into account. Notable changes involve the promotion of freedom of association, the right to organize and collective bargaining in the public service. International labour standards have been the guiding principles in this exercise. There is also ongoing collaboration between the ILO and the social partners in Botswana in the areas of social dialogue, the elimination of child labour and social security. The discussion on social protection is therefore timely.

The complex environment within which social security schemes operate demands a great deal of attention and expertise. A significant amount of ILO resources needs to be channelled to social security institutions to enable the viability of social security systems.

The achievements we have made as a country would not have been possible without our partnership with the ILO, through which we have been able to access technical expertise.

We are meeting in the aftermath of the global economic crisis. The effects of the crisis vary from country to country. In Botswana, we have experienced negative growth, unprecedented budget deficits and job losses during the period of the crisis. These have had a negative impact on the execution of development projects, the provision of services to the people and the income of many of our people. Our situation has been aggravated by the dependence of the economy on limited commodities.

Recovery from the global economic crisis is under way, and the prospects for our public finances have improved. Given the huge budget deficit, the Government is faced with no option but to exercise fiscal discipline. Emphasis is therefore on effective Government spending that is focused on national priorities. Another important lesson from the global economic crisis is the need to improve the resilience of our economy through more effective pursuit of economic diversification.

The period following the world economic crisis therefore presents numerous challenges to this Organization. The constituents of the ILO need the services that are provided by the Organization more than ever. As the Director-General has succinctly stated in his Report to the Conference, the world needs a new era of social development.

I advocate fiscal discipline. The ILO would increase its relevance and impact globally by focusing on key priorities within its mandate. Efforts to align funding priorities to the mandate of the ILO are therefore supported.

In conclusion, I am optimistic that the rich exchange of information, views and ideas in this Conference will shape the future direction of the ILO.

*(The Conference adjourned at 11.55 a.m.)*

## Fourteenth sitting

Tuesday, 14 June 2011, 12.40 p.m.

*President: Mr Nkili*

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

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*Original French: The PRESIDENT*

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We will now resume our discussion of the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General.

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*Original German: Ms SZYMANSKI (Government, Austria)*

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Allow me to say how happy I am to take part in this 100th Session of the International Labour Conference. I would like to say a special word of thanks to the Director-General for his Report, which addresses the concerns of the world population and which lends a strong voice to the poor of this world.

I welcome the successful conclusion of the work done on the Convention on decent work for domestic employees, because the conclusion of this Convention fills a gap in the standard-setting activities of the ILO by affording occupational safety and health protection to a particularly vulnerable group of workers, the vast majority of whom are women.

The global economic and financial crisis has left a mark all over the world, especially in the field of employment. More than ever today should the ILO make its message heard. It has to be heard loud and clear. For this purpose international players have to pursue coherent and coordinated strategies. It is also important that multilateral support is given to the initiative of the United Nations to set up a global social protection floor. So I greatly welcome the fact that we are now sending out a strong signal in that direction.

This Conference has also highlighted the importance of labour administration and a strong labour inspection system. Although there are businesses and enterprises which show commitment and take measures for their employees, we cannot simply rely on these individual initiatives. Workers, men and women, are entitled to safe and healthy working conditions regardless of the state of the economy in which they work or the size of the enterprise. This can only be guaranteed by a strong labour inspection system.

In this vein, Austria ratified the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187), this year.

There is one more aspect from the Director-General's Report that I would like to emphasize and to which we should all attach special importance, namely, the sharp increase in disparities of income

during the past 30 years. That is a growing threat to social cohesion and puts tremendous pressure on social expenditure.

An international study by Professor Wilkinson analysed a large number of countries in the world and concluded that the wider the gap between rich and poor, the greater the social problems in the country concerned. Whether with regard to crime, violence, drug abuse, pre-teen pregnancies, poor health, obesity, level of education or life expectancy, the evidence is quite clear that the more egalitarian the State, the better its situation, thus giving further proof of the importance of fair distribution.

On the whole, countries with efficient welfare systems, and this applies to Austria too, tend to have less disparity in income levels and greater economic growth. To achieve this kind of success, investment in education, social infrastructure and social benefits and socially balanced redistribution of wealth are needed.

Why is there less income disparity in Austria? One of the reasons is that we have an efficient social partnership. For more than 90 per cent of employees, wages are fixed by collective agreement on the basis of a wage policy geared to productivity. We have always endeavoured to keep the low-wage sector as small as possible. Recently a law was passed to combat wage dumping and social dumping. For the first time, this law provides for inspection by the authorities and penalties if workers are underpaid, and these statutory provisions apply to all workers, regardless of whether they are Austrian nationals or foreign.

A key role is also played by the cushioning effect of social benefits, which provide support especially for people in lower income categories.

A further aspect I wish to mention is our labour market policy. Cyclical and labour market measures have proved effective. For months, together with the Netherlands, we have had the lowest unemployment rate in the European Union, currently standing at 4.2 per cent.

But Austria too needs to work on budget consolidation. This process has to be balanced and fair. We cannot place more burdens on those who were not responsible for the financial crisis but are hardest hit by it. That is why the Austrian Government has decided that in its budget consolidation measures, 60 per cent will be geared to expenditure and 40 per cent will relate to revenue.

Social justice as part of a fair globalization must be our common goal.

I should like to thank Director-General, Mr Juan Somavia for his significant contributions to social justice, the affirmation of the Decent Work Agenda and the defence of sustainable development. Given the lessons that we have learned and the means at our disposal, it is impossible to understand why we now have policies in place which generate greater inequality and poverty. We have turned the clock back to a time when relations were based on dominance, even within the European Union, which was originally based on cooperation, solidarity, respect for all peoples and cultures and progress through social harmonization.

We must reject the humiliation of countries, peoples and human beings throughout the world. We must reaffirm the values of universalism, multilateralism and multiculturalism that the ILO voices and promotes. However, as the Director-General has stated, we need tougher rules in a number of different areas. We must rein in and control the unfettered financial sector and refocus attention on the workers and the common good.

It is also essential that we restore hope and confidence to young people. The neo-liberal policies and remedies which are being thrust upon my country, upon the European Union and elsewhere in the world, are leading to more unemployment and poverty. They are undermining existing social advances. It is appalling to witness how the concepts of development, modernity, competitiveness and productivity are being wilfully manipulated and redefined.

Let us not forget the past, including the recent past, as highlighted in the Report to the Conference, lest we forget the causes of the crisis and those responsible. We must ensure that we are not called on to make unfair sacrifices by those who brought on the crisis.

The ILO has done so much. We have moved from subsistence wages to a fair share of the wealth produced by workers. We have won workers' rights, leading to safe and steady jobs. We have seen social rights extend to many. Society has recognized and guaranteed many of these rights. Progress has been made in terms of working time, collective bargaining and investment in basic infrastructure and services. The fundamental Conventions of the ILO need to be enforced and we must continue to fight for the Decent Work Agenda. We must combat precarious work and the informal sector. In this context, we would like to commend the work which has been done on the convention concerning decent work for domestic workers which is going to be approved at this Conference. The Report states, and quite well, that we will not simply find pre-packaged solutions. We have to build them ourselves and that is something that requires input from citizens.

Recently in Portugal, the Troika bringing together the European Union, the International Monetary Fund and the European Central Bank imposed, as if it were the only possible solution, a programme which denies the possibility of growth and economic development, and undermines the workers, democracy and national sovereignty.

One of the questions we have to ask ourselves is, why is this the case and why is the ILO not doing all that it can to bring its authority to bear regarding

the development of these austerity programmes? The financial leaders and shareholders argue that there is no other solution, but democracy itself is under attack. In a democratic system there is never just one solution. The Report of the Director-General presented to this Conference really has a great deal to say and contains very many concrete proposals that can help us find alternative solutions in each country throughout the world. We need, first of all, to produce goods and services which are useful to the development of societies, which help boost the real economy and make it possible for small firms to flourish and to create decent and useful jobs and wealth that can be redistributed. We must continue to fight. We must have hope and confidence in the future.

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Mr OTHMAN PEHIN DATO (*Minister of Home Affairs, Brunei Darussalam*)

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In 2008, we experienced a global financial crisis that has had a strong, resounding impact on economies around the world. Recovery is still ahead of us and unemployment in most countries is still too significant and far from recovery.

Nevertheless, the ILO continues to promote decent work and to stress the importance of social protection for all types of workers, not forgetting domestic workers.

This year's Global Report, *Equality at work: The continuing challenge* is important to us all. Brunei Darussalam supports all efforts to eliminate any sort of discrimination in the international labour market arena. Every opportunity to access employment should be made available, regardless of race, gender or even religion.

In Brunei Darussalam, the 2009 Employment Order provides for the protection of basic rights and wages, and does not create any distinctive differences between its national workforce and migrant workers.

One of the items on the agenda of the Conference this year is the second discussion on decent work for domestic workers. We consider it very important to pursue this item intensively. As we all know, work in a household is vital to the daily preservation of the economy. Therefore, we are pleased to know that the ILO is pursuing this commitment to the fullest.

Also on the agenda is this year's recurrent discussion on social protection. We look forward to learning more from all Member countries here today about good practices towards a better social protection system or scheme. Recently, Brunei Darussalam has taken two major steps towards ensuring a better future for its retired citizens. The first step was the raising of the mandatory retirement age from 55 to 60 years. The second was the establishment of a new supplemental contributory pension scheme, which helps to ensure the continued welfare of individuals by maintaining equitable standards of living after retirement. The scheme also covers those who are working in the formal sector, providing them with an additional social safety net when they reach their mandatory retirement age.

I believe that the 100th Session of the International Labour Conference will bring viable and positive developments that will further strengthen awareness of workers' needs.

In conclusion, on behalf of my delegation, I would like to express my gratitude to the ILO for its achievements and for its continuous support to-

wards the betterment of the quality of working life. We look forward to an auspicious Conference.

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Mr DE LEEUW (*Worker, Belgium*)

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This 100th Session of the International Labour Conference shows that the ILO is relevant and vital, now more than ever. A pioneer in 1944, with the Declaration of Philadelphia, the ILO views the economy and finance as resources at the service of mankind, and social justice as not merely as a goal to be achieved, but as a means of action. The Director-General's Report has reiterated this. Sustainable development must be at the service of social justice.

Among the challenges that the Report highlights, inequality and discrimination loom large. I would like to highlight a recent victory achieved by the Belgian unions in the fight against discrimination. We took legal action against a temporary employment agency. In its internal computer system, the company had been systematically listing clients who did not want temporary workers of foreign origin. The courts found the agency guilty of discriminatory hiring practices.

The struggle to defend the principles of the ILO is an ongoing one. Although they are fundamental to social dialogue, trade union freedom and the exercising of trade union rights are still too often flouted. However, there are glimmers of light in a picture which is often too sombre. Our Iranian trade union comrade, Mr Osanloo Mansour, is free at last. International solidarity with the Iranian Trade Union Federation in a key role has borne fruit. We are continuing to fight for all trade union leaders who still languish in prisons, in order to liberate them.

Sadly, violations of basic workers' rights are not limited to the one continent. Fifteen out of 26 cases dealt with 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). Belgium and Luxembourg are preparing to ratify an investment agreement with Panama. We are now mobilizing against this treaty, since treaties with countries where social and trade union rights are violated certainly do not constitute a tool for decent work.

However, the most important struggle today is the one against the neo-liberal answer that the world is providing to the financial crisis. The self-interest of a few CEOs, bankers, hedge funds and other speculators has led to bubbles in the real economy. All bubbles are caused by human greed, leaving societies and households in ruins.

After each crisis, governments and businesses act as if nothing ever happened, and present us with a dilemma – austerity or the total bankruptcy of our societies. We believe that austerity is like treating the symptoms of a sick patient without tackling the real cause of the disease. On that point, in this context, the outcome of the joint ILO–IMF summit in September last year was a hopeful breakthrough. One of the main conclusions of the conference was that we need to strengthen our social protection systems, in particular the Social Protection Floor, and the collective bargaining system, in order to reduce growing inequality. For us, wages are the engine of our economies, and citizens should maintain their purchasing power to keep the economy running. It is, therefore, unwise and unacceptable that pay, collective bargaining and social dialogue are under attack. Particularly in Europe, we have been experiencing a fierce attack on independent wage setting.

Time has come to make it clear to policy-makers that it is imperative to choose prosperity instead of austerity. It is for this reason that we, the European unions, will rally together in Luxembourg, and our message there will be “no to inequality, no to austerity, go for prosperity, no to the dismantling of our social structures”.

Together we are strong. That was the message in Philadelphia, and it is a message that still guides us in 2011.

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Mr WIG (*Employer, India*)

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I feel a sense of pride in addressing this august House, which has emerged as a harbinger of industrial peace, prosperity and social cohesion in the post-world war era.

We have moved two years ahead of the recession, yet the situation is not significantly different. Many countries are still in the twilight zone of their economic recovery. The employment situation is equally grim: close to 212 million people are unemployed; nearly 1.5 billion people – half of the total workforce – have vulnerable job conditions; and 75 to 80 per cent of the workforce does not have any form of social security cover. The Middle East political crisis, catastrophe in Japan and the financial crisis in Europe have collectively thwarted major initiatives to recovery. However, there are positive signals from Asia, which is emerging as a ray of hope in the midst of crisis to lead our way to a safer destination.

The Director-General's Report, which duly acknowledges these sombre facts and confronts us with certain other hard-hitting socio-economic indicators, forming part of the Millennium Development Goals, is most apt and opportune if sustainable development is to be attained. Yet, the way forward, we feel, must include the combined perspective of the social partners, who alone can chart out implementable solutions.

The Report is eloquent on the role of globalization for producing more and creating wider markets. The emphasis on growth is also well appreciated by industry. There is, therefore, no looking back from globalization and growth-orientated policies. Outcomes that produce deficits are a result of weak governance, which needs to be seriously addressed.

Social justice and inclusive growth can be ensured only through creating wider employment opportunities, which require strengthening education and training infrastructure.

I am happy to say that India has achieved a considerable success in this regard by reaching close to a 75 per cent literacy rate and creating successful PPP models for skills development. Employment is the best form of social security and skills-based jobs are the only sustainable jobs.

Female empowerment through education is another important issue for inclusive development. There is a saying that if you educate a man, you only educate an individual, but if you educate a woman, you educate a family. I am sure that the ILO Conventions will be more effective and meaningful if the education of women is stressed by the ILO in all its programmes and policies.

A huge informal economy, employing more than 60 per cent of the workforce in Asia, Africa and Latin America, needs support in terms of technology, resources and social security policies. This sector contributes to as much as 60 per cent of national GDP, yet it remains outside the ambit of all devel-

opmental programmes and policies. Substantial support from the ILO to improve the conditions of workers in the informal economy is critically needed. I am happy to say that India has taken the lead by enacting legislation providing for social security for unorganized sector workers, and health insurance cover has been provided to approximately 90 million persons in the informal economy.

Sustainable enterprises and quality jobs are the most desired tools for achieving social justice; a supportive environment for promoting entrepreneurial culture is required.

One very important aspect that I want to mention is corruption, which has acquired a global dimension and is estimated to be a US\$3 trillion industry that eats away at growth. The poor and the people at

the base of the pyramid are the direct victims of it. We are happy that the issue has found echoes in the Director-General's Report. I am sure that a clarion call from this global platform will help to create the desired momentum against the monster of corruption.

To conclude, I would like to say that social justice, which is the signature tune of the ILO Constitution that was drafted in 1919 and revisited in 1944, is once again at a crossroads because of uneven and lopsided development. We must share positive experiences, develop appropriate strategies and strengthen cooperation for a balanced development, and the tripartite approach is an ideal tool for doing so.

*(The Conference adjourned at 1.05 p.m.)*

## Fifteenth sitting

Tuesday, 14 June 2011, 2.30 p.m.

*President: Mr Hossu*

### REPORTS OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE GOVERNING BODY AND OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL: DISCUSSION (CONT)

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*Original French: The PRESIDENT*

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We will now resume the general discussion of the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General.

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*Mr CHATURVEDI (Government, India)*

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We congratulate the Office for its excellent Report, which provides useful insight into the impact of globalization on growth patterns and discusses the challenges to achieving social justice, equity and sustainable development for making a new beginning.

The ILO has, over the years, provided valuable leadership in terms of implementing labour standards, strengthening workers' rights and finding acceptable solutions to labour market issues. We share the concerns expressed in the Report about rising social and economic imbalances in society on account of globalization. The dilution of labour standards could be a possibility when countries strive for competitiveness in the global economy and work towards attracting foreign investment. However, the Decent Work Agenda of the ILO has withstood the test of time to emerge as a universal and successful mandate for the protection of the interests of workers all over the world.

At this critical juncture, when we are on the road to recovery from the financial crisis, it is imperative for all member States to construct a new pattern of growth through rapid and sustained increases in decent work.

The Indian economy has proved its strong resilience to the external economic shocks created by the global financial crisis by exhibiting a much faster recovery than expected.

The strong macroeconomic fundamentals that helped the Indian economy withstand the shock primarily feature high levels of domestic investment and savings rates that can support and sustain a GDP growth rate of about 8.5–9 per cent; the presence of a robust corporate sector contributing enormously to productivity and investment in the economy; sustained fiscal consolidation and financial sector management; and a comfortable level of foreign exchange reserves.

The Government of India is operating various social security schemes for workers. A number of labour laws have been formulated for organized sec-

tor workers. However, in India, 94 per cent of the workforce is in the unorganized sector.

The unorganized sector is characterized by a lack of labour law coverage, the seasonal and temporary nature of occupations, high labour mobility, the dispersed functioning of operations, the casualization of labour, a lack of organizational support and low bargaining power, all of which make workers vulnerable to socio-economic hardships.

The Government of India remains committed to providing social security benefits to the vast workforce in the unorganized sector. A number of schemes and programmes are in operation to achieve this objective. Labour welfare funds have been set up and the Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act, 2008, has been enacted. Furthermore, an ambitious health insurance scheme called Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana has been established to guarantee health coverage to all workers in the unorganized sector who are living below the poverty line.

The Government has enacted the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, which provides mandatory assurance of at least 100 days of employment every year, at minimum wages, for at least one person per household. The Government is also in the process of introducing a Food Security Act to introduce broader economic reform in the public distribution system.

Taking into account the existing vocational training facilities and realistic demand for skilled workers in the country, the Government of India has introduced a new skills policy, the aim of which is to achieve rapid and inclusive growth by enhancing individuals' employment prospects and ability to adapt to changing technologies and labour market demands, improving the productivity and living standards of workers and strengthening global competitiveness in the country.

With regard to the request made, in paragraph 155 of the Report, for the expeditious ratification of all the core ILO Conventions, we would like to submit that it has always been the practice in India that we ratify a Convention when we are fully satisfied that our laws and practices are in conformity with the relevant ILO Convention. The ratification of any instrument is a national governance issue. The constraints faced by countries in ratifying particular Conventions have to be appreciated. Each member State of the ILO has different capacities and requirements. The special needs of individual countries should be kept in mind. Hence, the thrust should not be on ratification alone. Furthermore, the



non-ratification of some of the core or governance Conventions by member States should not be taken to demonstrate their absence of compliance of the principles enshrined in these instruments. Rather, overall action taken by member States to implement the provisions of various labour standards should be taken into account in order to reach a conclusion about the extent of their commitment to labour welfare.

We fully appreciate the concerns expressed in the Report about the unequal outcomes of globalization. The implementation of well-designed social security benefits, the promotion of productive employment and an emphasis on gender equality can bring about sound economic growth and help reduce disparities in the income and living standards of workers in the long run. A commitment is required from all member States under the leadership of the ILO to make the new era of social justice a reality.

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*Original Turkish: Mr AYDEMİR (Government, Turkey)*

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Although my country has been represented at the ministerial level at every session of the Conference, it was unfortunately unable to do so this year owing to our general elections. I take this opportunity to convey the best regards of my Government and the Minister.

At the outset, I would like to commend Mr Juan Somavia, the ILO Director-General, for his Report and its appendix, which draws attention to the difficulties the workers are experiencing in the occupied Arab territories and emphasizes such important matters as employment, vocational training, social dialogue and social protection in the context of decent work. The ending of the blockade in the region and the start of a peace process, which will affect working life positively, should be the demand of everyone.

Our ultimate desire is that the events occurring in some of our friendly and brotherly Arab countries which affect human rights in every respect, in particular economic and working life, will come to a peaceful end without any more bloodshed, and that a full democratic system and a harmonious environment, including industrial peace, will be established.

While making a great effort to bring about peace in the region, Turkey has also been contributing to all kinds of humanitarian aid by mobilizing all its resources and, as in the case of Libya, helping without discrimination all those who migrated for employment to our region to escape from the conflict areas.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in the earthquake and tsunami in Japan and to express our heartfelt sympathy for the people of Japan. I would like to voice our belief that Japan will recover quickly from this tragic event.

Thanks to the rapid and strong measures taken against the effects of the global crisis during the last two years, a possible major disaster in the international economy was successfully prevented. However, since global recovery is not yet complete, there are many measures to be taken to prevent such crises in future. Income inequality and employment continue to pose important problems in many countries. Especially since the 1990s, poverty and income inequality, too, have become a major problem. According to a social and economic working paper published by UNICEF in 2011, while 20 per

cent of the world's richest populations shared, on average, 85 per cent of the world's income during the period 1990–07, 20 per cent of the poorest populations shared only 1 per cent.

Furthermore, the ILO has estimated that between 75 and 80 per cent of the world population does not have access to basic social protection and that half of the 3 billion working people in the world are employed in precarious jobs. Primary importance should be attached to social protection in order to eliminate this injustice in today's world. Social protection should include the whole of society but, at the same time, should not prevent access to working life and should not promote informal employment.

We note with satisfaction that the G20 countries, including Turkey, have adopted and have given their support to the Global Jobs Pact, which provides tools for the implementation of decent jobs and fair globalization in these countries. We particularly expect all countries to have the same sensitivity vis-à-vis the respect for labour rights.

We commend the Director-General of the International Labour Office on his Report entitled *A new era of social justice*, which we believe will contribute to the strengthening of social justice within the framework of productive employment, gender equality, social harmony and economic growth.

However, we expect the ILO to play a more active role in taking the necessary steps to realize or fulfil the requirements of this Report. I am pleased to state that in Turkey we are carrying out policies aimed at the implementation of this Report. We have taken important steps in the fields of social security and social protection and in combating unemployment and informal employment. We have prepared a broad-based national employment strategy in order to increase employment. We have allocated important financial resources to active employment policies, and we are implementing a national action plan to combat informal employment. Within this framework, a seven-point decrease in informal employment was recorded in the last six years.

While we are promoting formal employment and increasing controls and inspections, using all means of technology. We have reconstructed our social security system and have implemented new social protection policies that will cover the whole of society. The whole population is now covered by universal health insurance and 83 per cent of the population is covered by the social insurance scheme. A number of constitutional amendments have been drafted to extend fundamental rights and freedoms in our country in the light of the ILO's standards, including freedom of association.

I would like to state that the new regulations governing working life will meet ILO standards and will be among the priorities of the new Government.

Before concluding, I would like to announce that my Ministry, together with the ILO and ISSA, will host the 19th Congress on Occupational Health and Safety which will be held in Istanbul from 11–15 September 2011, and I am pleased to invite all stakeholders to participate in this important congress, to which we would like to invite ministers and representatives of the employers and workers.

I would like to thank you for inviting me to address the International Labour Conference, both as Minister for Labour and Employment and on behalf of the French Presidency of the G20.

As you know, the President of the French Republic, Nicolas Sarkozy, has decided to put labour issues on the agenda of the G20 and has expressed the wish that the ILO Director-General, Mr Somavia, take part in the summits and contribute to their discussions.

Our interest in these issues concerns not just the G20 but the entire international community, and that was why I spoke before the assembly of the United Nations on 3 June last and why I wish to raise the topic here today.

We know that globalization constitutes progress because it creates wealth, reduces poverty and brings men and cultures together, but we are also aware that, as it operates today, globalization leads to imbalances. The unprecedented economic crisis that we have just experienced is a frightening demonstration of this.

The crisis has had not only economic consequences but also dramatic financial and social consequences for millions of people who have become unemployed. The President of the Republic mentioned them when he spoke in this very hall in June 2009.

The crisis has had major consequences in terms of employment – 30 million jobs lost in two years. Young people wishing to enter the labour market have had a particularly hard time. The crisis has also revealed flagrant inequalities, and the income gap between the rich and the poor has never been so great.

The Director-General reminded us in his opening speech that the wealthiest 60 million people in the world have an accumulated income that is equal to that of the 3.5 billion poorest segment – half of humanity. This is why we can no longer content ourselves with regulating globalization simply from a financial and economic standpoint; we also have to embark upon the social regulation of globalization in order to bring concrete answers to the expectations and problems of our citizens.

The ILO can certainly contribute to this. To promote social justice and make work a means of achievement rather than servitude is the ambition of the ILO, and has been since its beginnings. That is the message behind the guidelines of the Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization of 2008 and the Global Jobs Pact of 2009.

This goal is also being pursued at this Conference, with three objectives that we fully endorse: social protection for all – and I will come back to that shortly because it is one of the priorities of the President of the G20; the advancement of the labour rights of the most vulnerable workers, which is the subject of the Convention on domestic workers; and the enforcement of those rights at the national level, by strengthening labour administration and inspection. We shall work together with you in this endeavour.

The G20 countries account for 85 per cent of the world's GDP and two-thirds of its population. We believe that those countries can provide the necessary stimulus, but on one condition only: that they work with all existing organizations in a coordi-

nated and complementary manner, never in competition.

The summit of Heads of State and Government of the G20 in Pittsburgh in September 2009 and the meeting of the Ministers of Labour and Employment in Washington in 2010 started things moving, and it is France's proposal that, together with all those who, like us, are convinced that we need to go further, we maintain the momentum.

Let me return now to the four social priorities set by our presidency. True, we more often hear about macroeconomic issues, but labour issues are just as important and have to be dealt with the same conviction, because otherwise we will not have learned the lessons of the 2008 crises.

The first objective is to create jobs. It is important that we share a common goal as far as jobs are concerned, even though our labour markets are different from one another.

In the G20 we wish to dwell particularly on the employment of the young and the most vulnerable, the most vulnerable in France being the long-term unemployed. People who already had a problem finding work before the crisis certainly have not seen any improvement since then. In other countries, the most vulnerable are those who work in the informal sector, but we all have a need to give the young the opportunity to find a job. This is a concern that faces every country in the world.

To follow the work of the G20 on employment, we propose that a working party be set up which would make it possible to involve the social partners. In this we intend to work closely with Mexico, which will be responsible for the presidency of the next G20.

The second objective of France's presidency is to develop a Social Protection Floor suited, of course, to the circumstances of each country. It is a subject that is on the agenda of your Conference, and the ILO is actively involved with other international agencies in promoting this initiative in the field.

We realize that the Social Protection Floor has to differ from country to country. The needs of our populations are like our economic and financial resources – they are not the same. Even in Europe, there are no two neighbouring countries that have the same system. But the objective is not to up the same model everywhere. There would be no point in that. What we want is to encourage all countries to adopt a Floor that suits their economic and social situation and respects the sovereignty of each country.

Some countries have already taken initiatives to develop their Social Protection Floor, but we can do more if we work together. Your work at this session of the Conference, like the Social Protection Floor Advisory Group, chaired by Ms Bachelet, will undoubtedly be extremely useful.

The third objective of the French Presidency of the G20 is to promote respect for social rights and rights at work. The member countries of the ILO must, of course, set an example by implementing the ILO's own Conventions. Voting in favour of them is all to the good, but it is better to ratify them. Implementing them is better still, and that is the requirement for us all.

More broadly, what is important is that we forge ahead toward the effective implementation of these rights, that we fight against discrimination at work and for equality of women and men at work, for the introduction of social dialogue machinery. We must

strive to promote the concept of decent work that the ILO has espoused.

Respect for fundamental rights is not just the concern of States and international organizations. All stakeholders have to be mobilized, because it concerns enterprises as well, for example in their relations with subcontractors. That is why we hope that the Business Summit (B20) and the Social Summit that will take place at the same time as the G20 will testify to the commitment of the social partners.

The fourth and last objective is to improve coordination between the international organizations. Coordination is essential to ensure that social policies on the one hand, and economic and financial policies and development policies on the other, are consistent. We welcome the support that the President of Finland gave to this approach in her opening speech.

We support the various initiatives that are already under way. The World Bank has already taken the social dimension on board in funding field activities. Twelve per cent of its loans are for social protection. The same is true of the IMF and the WTO, which has expressed its desire to work more closely with the ILO. It is extremely positive that a new cooperation agreement was signed between the OECD and the ILO on 23 May last in Paris.

All this coordination is most useful – indeed, I would say indispensable – in order for the social dimension to be taken more into consideration by the international organizations, but, frankly, we can do more. We can do more by making the presence of mutual observers in international organizations systematic, just as we need the ILO to be consulted more systematically in order to assess the social impact of the measure envisaged by other international organizations.

These are the four priorities of the French Presidency, which it hopes will be shared.

As far as our timetable and our working methods are concerned, we are going to continue to work together with all the stakeholders wherever possible.

Later on today, I am going to hold an informal meeting with the G20 Ministers of Labour and Em-

ployment to consider what recommendations we could make next September. President Nicolas Sarkozy has asked us to work closely with the United Nations, the ILO and other international organizations, which represent the whole of the international community. This is why we wish to listen to as many opinions as possible.

The French Presidency also wishes to involve the social partners in each stage of this G20, because we believe in the new role that they can play in world governance. It is social dialogue too, but it is a social dialogue that can contribute even more.

Obviously, this Organization is particularly sensitive to these issues, and we are convinced that, without the close involvement of the stakeholders of the real economy, the social and labour issues we shall be discussing at the G20, particularly in the social sphere, would not be able to make any real progress.

When the President of the Conference opened this 100th Session, the Director-General said that it was time to commit to a new era of social justice and economic growth that goes hand in hand with sustainable development. We must quickly draw all the lessons from the 2008 crisis without exception, so that tomorrow we do not have to choose between economic growth and social justice, or free trade and respect for workers' rights.

As I speak to you now, things are clear. The concepts, convictions and studies are there. What we need now is action.

These are the issues before us today. Have we learned all the lessons of the crisis of 2008? More broadly, what sort of world do we want to live in? What sort of world do we want to see our children grow up in? These are the questions we must ask ourselves.

As to the voice of the people, that is quite clear: the world must be made a better place. I count on the discussions of this International Labour Conference to help us move together towards that goal.

*(The Conference adjourned at 3.05 p.m.)*

## Sixteenth sitting

Tuesday, 14 June 2011, 4.45 p.m.

*Presidents: Mr Hernández Sánchez, Mr. Hossu*

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

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*Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT*

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We will now resume the discussion of the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General.

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*Original Spanish: Mr BLANES CASAS (Under Secretary of Labour, Secretariat of Labour and Social Welfare, Mexico)*

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It is a pleasure for me to be here at this 100th Session of the International Labour Conference and I have the honour to represent the Secretary of Labour and Social Welfare of Mexico, Mr Alarcón, who has asked me to convey his warmest greetings to you all.

The year 2009 will go down in history as the year in which the global economy went through one of its worst ever crises. However, Mexico is now moving forward.

The return to economic growth and job creation has been possible thanks to the efforts of the productive sectors and the support of the three branches of government: federal, state and municipal.

Over the last two years, we have seen economic recovery, which has been based on strict control of public spending, with a very low public deficit, control over inflation, which is at its lowest level for 41 years, and increasing our levels of competitiveness.

In 2010, the economy grew by 5.4 per cent, the highest rate for ten years. For 2011, we have revised the forecast for GDP growth from 3.8 to 4.3 per cent, and we are expecting similar growth in 2012.

With regard to the increase in employment, in 2010 more than 730,000 net formal jobs were registered with the Mexican Institute for Social Security, the highest figure for 14 years. So far in 2011, we have created more than 327,000 additional jobs and the number of those registered with the Social Security Institute is at a historic high.

But even with all of this, what has been achieved in Mexico in terms of employment is neither sufficient nor satisfactory. We can and must do more. Formal employment must be the beginning and end of every economic policy in a humanist government so that we can achieve better levels of employment, pay, benefits, training, productivity, social security and better conditions of safety and health in workplaces.

In this respect, in Mexico we have three fundamental labour-related objectives: competitiveness, productivity and decent work.

Mexico has formal mechanisms for ongoing, respectful and constructive social dialogue because it considers that tripartism is the best means of increasing employment and raising workers' living standards.

One example is the Mexican sugar industry. Thanks to the System for the Measurement and Improvement of Productivity (SYMAPRO), there are now peaceful labour relations and a permanent dialogue that fully respects workers' rights, and a new industrial legislative contract focused on productivity.

The application of this model in our country provided grounds for recognition by the ILO last year, at the 99th Session of the International Labour Conference, as an example of a labour model that could be replicated in other countries.

Another example is the textile industry, which has modernized the legislative contracts in all its sectors, benefitting almost 18,000 workers working for 246 companies.

Today we have the best indicators on peaceful labour relations in the history of our country. Over the last four-and-a-half years of the Calderón Administration, thanks to constructive and respectful social dialogue, more than 50,000 jobs were created and only 85 strikes have been held.

Notwithstanding the above, we are concerned that the economic recovery has not brought enough job creation with it: youth unemployment stands at 9.6 per cent, compared with only 5.2 per cent for general unemployment. Moreover, with regard to informal employment, during the first quarter of 2011 more than 54 per cent of workers, according to the methodology used by the ILO, were employed but did not have guaranteed access to social security.

Against this background, the Government of Mexico has put a lot of effort into supporting a labour reform that will help us achieve the main objectives of competitiveness, productivity and decent work.

Integral reform of the Federal Labour Law would lead to the establishment of conditions that would enable access to formal employment for young people, women and persons over 40; improve productivity so that workers' earnings could be increased without sacrificing their rights; align the provisions of the law with international conventions to which Mexico is a party; regulate subcontracting arrangements; strengthen the protection of the rights of

working mothers and vulnerable groups; modernize and strengthen the labour justice system so that it is more robust and transparent; strengthen sanction mechanisms; and eliminate child labour for children under 14 outside the family.

In this respect, Mexico respectfully calls on the ILO to promote more rapid labour reform in all our countries in order to strengthen full respect for labour rights and generate decent jobs within the formal economy, along with social security benefits.

Mexico expresses its firm commitment to comply with and respect international conventions within our domestic system because it considers that employment and decent work are the best ways of making use of peoples' skills and training in a way that benefits workers and their families.

Mexico is a country of laws. It has a humanist, democratic Government that always acts in accordance with the law. It renews its undeniable obligation to respect autonomy and freedom of association, which are fundamental pillars of our society. It reiterates its will to bring about the conditions that will create more sources of decent work to bring young people, women, older people, persons with disabilities and vulnerable groups in general into the job market.

With the commitment of all of the productive sectors, the Government of Mexico will continue to do its utmost to make employment and decent work a reality for all.

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*Original French: Ms MILQUET (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Employment, Equal Opportunities, with responsibility for Migration and Asylum Policy, Belgium)*

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The 100th International Labour Conference represents one of the major challenges of our time and in our history, namely that of ensuring a vitally important social dimension to globalization, and the battle to establish a new growth model which is humane, sustainable and socially viable.

I would like to thank the Director-General for his Report, and I agree with what he has said. I think that we all have an interest in making sure that growth, competitiveness and the recovery of public finances do not take place to the detriment of employment, labour standards and social protection, thereby undermining the rights of citizens.

Strategies for sustainable, long-term growth should not just involve employment and the social dimension, but should also be a priority objective for a new model of economic growth. This will constitute a paradigm shift on the scale of the Copernican Revolution.

We therefore need to strengthen, within the global governance framework, the overarching role of the ILO in the fields of employment and social protection, as the guarantor of labour standards, and the only socio-economic organization which operates on a tripartite basis.

In the view of my delegation, the Office should focus on five areas of activity. First of all, we need coherence. We think that we need greater coherence and coordination of efforts within the multilateral system in order to guarantee a social dimension to globalization. The role of the Office needs to be strengthened. It has to be the driving force behind cooperation platforms, leading to greater coherence in the approaches adopted. This goal should lead to internal reforms, particularly with regard to the way that we go about our work, with a view to making our collective strategy more effective.

Recent work on instruments relating to social security and the Global Jobs Pact should contribute to achieving international consensus, in order to consolidate the position of the ILO in the area of global socio-economic governance.

What is more, globalization will never gain acceptance, and will never be balanced, if the social partners, who are the biggest economic actors, are not involved in the decisions made. They need to be involved in the decision-making process, because only an effective collective bargaining system will ensure balance with regard to wage policy. The ILO needs to begin thinking about how the tripartite message can be brought into the broader multilateral and international arena.

Thirdly, with regard to labour standards, it seems that we need to set specific objectives with regard to the ratification of the core ILO Conventions, and continue to develop labour standards.

I welcome the decisions made with regard to instruments on decent work for domestic workers, which will provide better protection for these workers under international law. On the subject of standards, I would also like to mention the need for a court, or some other organization for dispute settlement, which is able to interpret and ensure the enforcement of the core ILO Conventions.

Finally, we come to the G20. With a view to achieving progress, within the framework of the United Nations, with regard to global economic governance, Belgium supports the French presidency of the G20 in their efforts to make the ILO's employment objectives the cornerstone of global governance.

We should be able to collectively request that regular meetings of employment ministers take place in parallel to each G20 summit, to provide support and ensure, taking an approach that is new for the ILO, coherence with regard to the positions adopted by the G20 labour ministers.

Therefore, it stands to reason that the ILO should focus on labour administration and labour inspection. There is always the fear that international recommendations concerning global economic governance hand over control of employment and social policies to other major players. We therefore need to ensure that the Office is in a position to do everything in its power to support labour administrations.

I also welcome the extremely positive outcome of the Conference and, on behalf of my country, thank you for the work that you have done. I hope that the ILO will continue to promote and support the necessary collective efforts.

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Mr MAJOR (Government, Hungary)

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The 100th Session of the Conference is an important occasion in the Organization's life. It is a time for celebration but also for objective evaluation. During this session, and under such an able presidency, we are doing both of these things in a balanced way.

The Hungarian Government is firmly convinced that the crisis is not over until employment increases dynamically. On behalf of the Hungarian Government, I would like to express my appreciation to the International Labour Organization for focusing its activities on identifying the roots of and the reasons for the global economic and financial crisis and for providing solutions to handle the consequences that still affect us.

Today, the ILO plays an essential role in the international coordination of economic, social and development policies and is an indispensable partner of the leading monetary financial and trade institutions. Furthermore, it is committed to the transformation of the globalized world in a way that would place people at the centre of sustainable growth.

We acknowledge that the ILO's values and policy tools, based on the principles of tripartism, have the capacity to make change happen. The Hungarian Government fully supports the Report of the Director-General, entitled *A new era of social justice*. We fully agree with his evaluations and find that his recommendations offer valuable guidance on how to manage the effects of the multidimensional crisis faced by the world of work. We agree that inefficient growth has reflected a deeper flaw in conventional policy strategy. Economic, employment and social policies have to mutually reinforce each other.

I would like to emphasize that Hungary attaches special attention to the labour market situation of young people. This social group was severely hit by the crisis. Tackling the challenges that young people face and improving their labour market integration and employability requires the harmonization of several policy areas and overarching measures that have an impact on both the demand and the supply side of the labour market.

We consider that we could learn from each other by sharing our national experiences and best practices and thereby promote the improvement of the labour market situation of young people. For this reason, we especially appreciated the findings in the Report of the Director-General concerning youth unemployment.

At the European level, Hungary, as the country currently holding the EU presidency, has placed the issue of youth unemployment on the agenda of the European Union in the last semester. Several important meetings have taken place with the involvement of high-level policy-makers to discuss the labour market situation of young people, concentrating on finding ways to enhance their employability, promote the learning of key competencies and provide more and better job opportunities for them.

At the national level, inactivity is still one of the key challenges for us. The Hungarian Government firmly believes that work is the main value-creating force; therefore we put great emphasis on leading the inactive groups back to the labour market by enhancing their capacity to find jobs through well-tailored training programmes and social protection measures.

Employment creation is one of the most important macroeconomic priorities of the Hungarian Government. Our target is an ambitious one: to create one million new jobs in a decade. In order to meet this goal, we aim to restructure passive measures in such a way as to encourage people to enter and re-enter the labour market and, at the same time, further strengthen active labour market policies.

Let me mention here that, on a short-term basis, Hungary has introduced a new system of public work so as to develop an effective labour market programme during and after the crisis to create jobs. We believe that temporary organized public employment programmes, such as short-term forms of public employment and employment guarantee

schemes are in line with the fundamental principles of the Global Jobs Pact.

Our main priority is the reconstruction of employment in a spirit of mutual appreciation, respect and peaceful cooperation. The opportunities arising from international cooperation could promote the achievement of our aims.

In conclusion, I would like to reassure you that Hungary identifies itself with the values of the ILO and fully supports its efforts aimed at social justice.

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*Original Russian: Mr FIRTASH (Employer, Ukraine)*

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The Ukrainian employers endorse the ideas and conclusions of the Director-General's Reports regarding the fundamental standards of decent work which are essential for sustainable development. We also share the concerns about the processes affecting the world's economic and financial systems and their impact on employment.

Symbolically, at its 100th Session, the International Labour Conference is examining one of the basic principles in the area of work, which is the prohibition of discrimination. Employers of Ukraine unswervingly adhere to the Conventions ratified by our country in this sphere – the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), and the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111).

We devote considerable attention to issues of labour market development, the creation of new jobs and new employment opportunities. This is closely linked to the implementation of another ILO document, the Global Jobs Pact.

We consider this issue in broad terms. It is essential, not only to create jobs, but to train skilled workers for them. With this in mind, the employers of Ukraine have drawn up a draft national framework for training which will enable us to meet the requirements of the economy for specialists with the necessary skills and experience.

Highly trained workers are needed to meet the demands of the labour market, and we devote considerable attention to expanding training in technical and scientific areas at secondary school and at university. The imbalance in the training of key workers is a global problem, which has been referred to in the Director-General's Reports.

In order to address these problems in Ukraine, we provide support for talented school pupils who have achieved high grades in natural sciences. We support student internships in companies, contribute to the modernization of school laboratories and the technical resources of universities, and support the establishment of university grants for students.

In addition to their collaboration with national universities, the employers of Ukraine have established relations with leading universities around the world. For example, this year at the University of Cambridge, with our financial assistance, a Ukrainian scholarship programme has been launched to enable the most talented students to obtain a Master's degree.

All of these measures will contribute to the development of Ukraine's technological and scientific potential. By encouraging training of a new generation of specialists we are laying the foundations for the country's innovative economic development.

I would like to touch on another important issue – the implementation of ILO instruments once they have been adopted. It is extremely important that the Conventions and the Recommendations of the

ILO should be properly implemented. Last year the Conference adopted the HIV/AIDS Recommendation, 2010 (No. 200). In a relatively short space of time, Ukrainian employers, together with the ILO Office in Ukraine, have begun to implement policies for the prevention of HIV/AIDS. We have also begun work on a national strategy for tripartite cooperation to combat HIV/AIDS in the workplace. This is yet another example of successful cooperation between the social partners; it shows that success can be achieved if governments, trade unions and employers join forces. Only social dialogue will enable us to achieve greater mutual understanding and cultural, spiritual and economic development of society.

To conclude I would like to extend my thanks, on behalf of the Employers of Ukraine, to Mr Juan Somavia, Director-General of the ILO, and to Mr Antonio Peñalosa, Secretary-General of the International Organisation of Employers (IOE), for all their invaluable help and support to Ukraine.

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Mr CHAYASRIWONG (*Government, Thailand*)

It gives me great pleasure to commend the Director-General for his comprehensive Report, *A new era of social justice*, which emphasizes looking to the future and working together to build social justice.

My delegation agrees that the new pattern of growth – an “efficient growth” as part of a fair globalization based on social justice – is an urgent need.

Thailand implements its national strategy in accordance with the Decent Work Agenda and the Global Jobs Pact, inspired by the conviction that we need to promote policies on productive employment, equality, social cohesion and sound economic growth.

Progress is being made in closing the gaps and extending social protection coverage to workers in the informal economy, who comprise the majority of the labour force in Thailand. It is estimated that about 24 million informal workers across the country are going to join the social insurance schemes on a voluntary basis. In addition, the Labour Protection for Homeworkers Act of 2010 will come into force very soon. As a result, domestic workers will be better protected, in closer conformity with international labour standards.

In July this year, the Occupational Safety, Health and Environment Act of 2011, which highlights respect for human dignity and dignity of work, will enter into force.

The Government has approved wage rates based on the skill standards of 22 occupational branches. These are higher than the minimum wage rates and, as a result, workers will earn a higher income and achieve a better quality of life, and employers will gain more competitiveness from higher productivity and better-quality products.

Thailand has a lot of experience in working with the ILO through the social dialogue mechanism. We are developing a Decent Work Country Programme for Thailand and ILO technical support is needed to help us meet its goals.

As part of its efforts to fight human trafficking, regulate recruitment practices and reduce recruitment costs to better protect migrant workers from abuse and exploitation, the Ministry of Labour has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the

ILO on employment cooperation and human trafficking.

Finally, my delegation greatly values the important roles of the ILO and its Director-General, Mr Somavia, and truly appreciate their cordial support to the tripartite constituents in the member States to achieve a new era of social justice.

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Mr NAKAMURA (*Employer, Japan*)

First of all, let me emphasize that Japan was greatly encouraged by the worldwide sympathy and support it received following the massive earthquake on 11 March. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my deepest gratitude to our friends all around the globe.

The disaster reminded us that supply chains have become truly global. Whether large or small, Japanese companies have close links with economic activity and employment in many countries. To fulfil their global economic responsibilities and live up to the trust placed in the nation, Japanese companies are striving to restore supply chains as quickly as possible. And now, economic activity in Japan is steadily recovering.

In global economic recovery, emerging countries with dynamic growth capacity have played a major role. The Japanese business community would also like to continue contributing to the formation of prosperous economies and societies throughout the world. It is vital that economic growth is sustainable and balanced. Encouraging investment is key to achieving such growth. Sound investment brings about economic and social development in many ways. These include building attractive production facilities and infrastructure, creating employment and shaping open consumer markets by bringing more people into the middle-income bracket. Investment is not undertaken simply for the profit of a few investors.

The Japanese business community believes that economic partnership agreements effectively promote regional economic integration and thereby contribute to realizing shared prosperity. Easing restrictions on foreign capital ceilings and making domestic regulations transparent enhances investment and trade in services. Such measures bring benefits to many by mobilizing untapped resources, including people, in the growth process. Constructive social dialogue plays an important role in promoting the equitable distribution of the wealth created.

I am firmly convinced that any discussion on creating employment by promoting investment should be linked to ensuring decent work backed by social protection. It is necessary to create a virtuous cycle, where social security stimulates economic activity, and economic growth makes social security systems more sustainable. Developing countries, in particular, need technical support to design such systems. Meanwhile, developed countries face falling birth rates and ageing populations, and some emerging countries will also have ageing populations in the near future. To ensure their social security systems are sustainable, such countries must avoid pushing fiscal burdens onto future generations or relying on excessive taxes and insurance premiums for employers and current generations of workers. They need to create fair and efficient systems funded by the nation as a whole.

Comprehensive social security requires not only reliance on the government, but also independent



effort. In Japan, cooperation between workers and employers has created high-quality corporate pension plans and other employee welfare systems run by companies, which contribute to workers' well-being.

To my regret, the ILO Asia and the Pacific Regional Meeting scheduled for April in Kyoto has been postponed. I suggest that the meeting be held in Japan in December. We look forward to welcoming friends from this House to Japan.

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Mr MLECZKO (*Government, Poland*)

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First of all let me congratulate our newly elected members of the Governing Body. Today we are all celebrating the 100th Session of the International Labour Conference. But first and foremost, the fact is that, for almost a century, the ILO has been upholding the highest standards for human rights and the rights of working people and fighting for the implementation for those standards in diverse communities around the world. Rightly proud of our achievements, we cannot, however, lose sight of the new challenges.

As the Director-General stated in his Report, *A new era of social justice*, the world needs a new vision, inspired by the idea of sustainable development, care for our planet and justice. The ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization and the Global Jobs Pact constituted an excellent starting point for attempting to achieve social justice. These instruments not only confirm the benefits of globalization but also call for more efforts to implement the policy on dignified work as a means of achieving better and more equitable benefits for all. They help in shaping policies to stimulate economic recovery to create jobs and to ensure the protection of workers and their families.

Poland, like many other Members of our Organization, recently went through a really difficult period. Guided by the principles of the ILO, and thanks to social dialogue and to our social partners, we did relatively well in the face of the financial crisis, maintaining economic growth. In recent years, many important measures have been adopted in our country in order to facilitate business activities. We are actively participating in the debate on labour administration and labour inspection. We are convinced of its paramount importance for the good governance of labour, sustainable economic development and the effective implementation of labour standards.

With equally great interest, we are following the discussion on social security, as it is our deep belief that there is a pronounced need for access to a basic Social Protection Floor that would at least ensure the level of protection provided by existing Conventions and also promote the gradual improvement of the quality of services. Recently, the most tangible evidence of the rapid and proper response of the ILO to the needs of the changing world and the Organization's protection of the most vulnerable can be seen in the discussion on domestic workers and the adoption of the documents in this regard.

The ILO has a historic obligation to continue its difficult and rewarding work. I can assure you that we will continue to fulfil Poland's part in global cooperation for the future of decent work.

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*Original Lao: Mr YANGYONGXENG (Worker, Lao People's Democratic Republic)*

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I am very proud to be able to represent the Lao Federation of Trade Unions, and participate in the 100th Session of the International Labour Conference. First of all, I would like to express my support for the Global Report presented by Mr Juan Somavia, the Director-General, under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, which demonstrates the achievements of recent years, to which the Director-General and member States contributed.

Last year, the Lao Federation of Trade Unions took into account the need to protect the legitimate rights and interests of the workers and labourers in the country by promoting and implementing several activities relating to the Lao Trade Union Act and the Labour Act, in order to comply with the International Labour Organization's Conventions on a step-by-step basis.

We have focused on disseminating the Labour Act, the Lao Trade Union Act and international labour standards to the working people throughout our country, especially the ILO Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), and those concerning safety and health, the prevention of child labour and HIV/AIDS in the world of work. We have also focused on monitoring and evaluating implementation throughout the country.

Furthermore, we have organized seminars in co-operation with the ILO on many themes, such as basic education on ILO Conventions, Decent Work Country Programmes, domestic workers and migrant workers. These are aimed at protecting the legitimate rights and interests of member trade unions and Lao workers. In addition, we have proposed that the minimum wage be increased to reflect real living conditions at the present time.

In order to improve the well-being of workers on a step-by-step basis, in accordance with ILO strategy, we have cooperated with state sectors. The Lao National Chamber of Commerce and other relevant sectors have organized meetings in order to discuss and find ways to solve problems that will have an impact on the country's workers in the future. In addition, we have promoted and created jobs for the working classes and other labourers to prepare for and respond to problems that may arise in the future.

The Lao Federation of Trade Unions always takes into account the well-being of workers and labourers in both the formal and the informal sectors. Furthermore, a plan has been developed to promote compliance with the international labour Conventions that have been ratified by the Lao People's Democratic Republic. In the future, we will continue to cooperate with the Government to study and ratify the ILO Conventions in order to protect the legitimate rights and interests of workers and labourers throughout the country, as well as in the region and throughout the world.

We are confident that this session of the Conference will bring benefits, and in particular will protect the legitimate rights and interests of workers and help eliminate poverty step by step.

To conclude, I wish the 100th Session of the International Labour Conference every success.

The Director-General's Report, *A new era of social justice*, challenges our ability to formulate innovative balanced policies to synergize economic growth and productivity with decent work and social advancement. Fiji has made this innovation through its Employment Relations Promulgation 2007, and expects the necessary paradigm shift to occur in conflict resolution culture from the adversarial to the good faith social dialogue approach that is crucial for sustainable enterprise and national building.

The Fiji Government fully supports this year's theme in the Global Report on the urgent need to eliminate all forms of discrimination, especially those in employment and occupation. Unfortunately, this moral corruption has been perpetuated by many neocolonialists who resist Fiji's efforts to remove this entrenched liability from its national governance and political system through our Peoples' Charter for Change, Peace and Progress. Under this Charter, the Government is committed to modernize Fiji by replacing a record number of colonial and outdated national policies and laws that are discriminatory, with modern ones that provide equal citizenship for all our people, irrespective of race, ethnicity, colour or creed.

For example, the Government has removed all forms of discrimination in respect of access to and selection in schools, and provides every child free and equal opportunities within our school system. Our Ministry of Education has maintained fee-free education for the first 13 years of primary and five years of secondary education; abolished external examinations in primary and lower secondary schools to reduce drop-outs from the school system; provided free transport to all students in primary and secondary schools who qualify under a means test; begun zoning of schools to bring education closer to all children; and provided free text books to all primary schools, beginning the same in secondary schools this year. The Government continues to work closely with non-Government school authorities to provide education facilities for the inflow of all children into the school system. We are expanding and upgrading rural high schools to Form 7 level to provide easy access for rural students straight to university education. This is also our strategy to eliminate child labour.

The Government has also initiated the long-pending land reform to make land available to everyone in Fiji, including investors, through the newly established Land Bank. Through reforms in labour, the civil service and public enterprise laws and policies, we are changing all government services to make them more effective and efficient in delivering social justice for all, without discrimination. The Government is committed to completing all these social and economic reforms to modernize Fiji by 2012, and to formulating a modern and progressive Constitution through an open consultation process. We are on target to have our first ever non-race-based general election by 2014 – a much desired outcome that has eluded us since our independence.

As clearly stated in our annual reports submitted to the International Labour Standards Department and our responses to the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards, the Government has

made very significant progress and will continue to honour its commitments to eliminate all forms of discrimination. We want to empower our people to use their talents and resources productively to create wealth in a sustainable manner with social responsibility. We want to build a modern Fiji that alleviates poverty for marginalized workers and provides a better quality of life for all, in an environment of freedom, dignity, security and peace.

We also applaud the recurrent discussion on social protection and social security under the follow-up to the 2008 ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization. Consistent with my statement last year, Fiji is now finalizing a new act on workers' compensation. The reformed workers' compensation system is designed to provide better and speedier health care and social security services. We are also reviewing our national provident fund and pension scheme to ensure better coverage with sustainable social security benefits to members. Consultations on this conclude this month and the drafting of reformed legislation will begin next month.

To conclude, the Government is committed to honouring its ILO obligations, while undertaking the modernization of Fiji under the Peoples' Charter. We appeal for more understanding from the international community in our efforts to remove all forms of social, economic and political discrimination, and wish to specially thank all countries that have understood Fiji in its commitment to build a modern Fiji with equal citizenry.

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*Original French: Mr GRIGNARD (Worker, France)*

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This is the 100th Session of the Conference and, as the Director-General said in his introductory comments, a moment to reflect on how better to focus the ILO's work in terms of multilateral governance, at a time when it is falling far short of people's expectations.

The 2008 financial crisis has made the G20 the place where financial regulations are decided. By inviting the ILO to participate, it has recognized that the social dimension is an inescapable feature of multilateral governance, and this is just as well because the world will remain chaotic so long as we fail to recognize the importance of social factors. But it is a huge challenge.

The ILO has to show that it can actually have an impact on events by means of activities that can change people's lives, particularly the poorest who do not have access to decent work, nor to education nor to health. It is a daunting challenge when so many workers doubt the ability of their representatives to point the way to sustainable economic development, to new social progress, so as to reduce social inequalities in their countries and in the world.

The unemployment that confronts so many people, especially the young, and the still uncorrected malpractices that come with putting finance at the centre of the world's economy can easily lead to isolationism, to the rise of populism, the calling into question of representative democracy and thus of international institutions, governments, employers' associations, workers' organizations.

In various parts of the world, young people are voicing their rejection of a world in which they have no place. The fact that we may understand the implications and legitimacy of their indignation does not solve the problem. This is not the time for oversimplification, when the only answers we can

find are for the medium term and entail highly complex compromises.

All too often the members of the G20 are concerned merely with their own interests, when it is the general interest that is at stake. The poorest countries do not have a place at the table and the ILO has to speak on behalf of everyone, embracing a compromise position devised by governments, employers and workers alike. The ILO has to prove that its role is essential. Ultimately, its legitimacy will depend on its growing ability to ensure that every economic, financial and environmental decision is given a social dimension.

But too many States feel that the social dimension is a drag on economic development. Too many employers feel that fundamental rights are a drag on the freedom to run a business. We at the ILO believe that social progress is part and parcel of a vibrant economy. Ensuring that the economic and social dimensions interact in practice should be a priority for the representatives of both workers and employers in the ILO.

This is something that entails organizing our efforts in a consistent manner at every level, from the enterprise to world governance. At the level of the enterprise, social dialogue means a dialogue among all the stakeholders and, as such, it has to be built into socially responsible companies. It means finding the best possible balance. Thus, multinational firms need to take into account the impact of their activities on the economic and social environments and make sure that they contribute to decent work and a respect for fundamental rights.

At the national level, consistency means above all a preliminary assessment of the social impact of economic options. At the international level, a social dimension has to be built into IMF and World Bank funding by earmarking part of that funding for strengthening cohesion. Ultimately this would involve establishing a social protection floor at the international. So as to show the poorest of the poor that the globalization of trade can go hand in hand with the advance of social progress.

In the name of the values we believe in, we at the ILO are taking part in a dialogue. But whether out of fear of the violent upheaval that could result from maintaining global imbalances unchanged or simply because we recognize people's fundamental rights, the status quo is not an option. Reducing the gap between the people and their institutional representation is a question of democracy, which must have its place in our discussions and in our aspirations for the future of the ILO.

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Ms ROMCHATTHONG (*Employer, Thailand*)

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It is my privilege to address you on this occasion, at a time when globalization is well understood by all of us.

This meeting is quite timely, as we have recently experienced a number of crises affecting countries around the world, namely the financial crisis in the United States, rising food and oil prices, the effects of global warming and, most recently, the earthquake and tsunami in Japan. It is important for us to realize that, in the near future, we may face similar disasters more frequently. The issue of what to do, how to prepare and react to these problems, has become a growing concern for all of us.

The ILO was initially created to combat poverty and social injustice. As the world has become more globalized, more interlinked and more complicated,

we expect that the ILO will also change and adapt further, in order to help governments, employers and workers to adapt to rapid changes in the labour and social arena. This assistance will vary from country to country. An inability to notice local differences could lead to a generalized and "one size fits all" approach, which is not the right one to adopt.

Today, in order to keep up with global progress, we need an era in which government policies genuinely support enterprise and human development, entrepreneurship and the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises. We also need an era in which people receive encouragement and support to move from the informal to the formal economy. Whilst it is important to promote decent jobs, it is equally important for the ILO to understand, and subsequently promote, business-friendly policies, in order to find the right balance between the two, and the formula for successful job creation. We must never forget that the private sector creates jobs.

We also acknowledge that some countries have policies that lower taxes to boost investment and deregulate the labour market to make them more flexible, which may have led to certain inequalities.

Nevertheless, we must also remember that those policies have, at the same time, also resulted in significant job creation and increased prosperity in developing countries.

Reverting from such policies to making markets less flexible and giving a greater role to the State would likely lead to job losses, business closures and more informal labour.

It should also be noted that people's expectations and material well-being have increased in line with the economic growth. Today, owning a cell phone, computer and/or motorbike, for example, has become the norm for many workers in many developing countries – especially in Asia – none of which would have been possible without pro-business policies and significant, direct foreign investment.

Finally, I would like to assure you that the Employers' Confederation of Thailand will continue to support and collaborate with the ILO in all of its endeavours to promote the Decent Work Agenda in Thailand.

We do hope that the ILO's approach in Thailand will also take into consideration the needs and concerns of the employers.

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*Original French: Mr SCHMIT (Minister of Labour, Employment and Immigration, Luxembourg)*

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This 100th Session of the International Labour Conference of the ILO calls on us to look ahead and focus our efforts on the immense tasks which have to be completed.

The progress that has been achieved over the last few decades has been remarkable. Without the ILO and its Conventions, the world of work would not have developed as it has. However, we also have to recognize that our Organization has sometimes had difficulties making itself heard. That was particularly the case in the 1930s, during the great depression, when it went against the received wisdom in favour of recovery and employment policies to help lift countries out of mass unemployment. This, in the end, led to totalitarianism and to the cataclysm of the Second World War.

As we emerge today from a widespread economic, social and financial crisis, we are confronted with new challenges. The Declaration on Social

Justice for a Fair Globalization and the Global Jobs Pact, are innovative responses that should be noted in economic governance, which has made very modest advances.

My country, Luxembourg, is convinced that development, economic performance and social progress should go hand in hand. We are convinced of the need to foster tripartite social dialogue, which is a fundamental basis of a social market economy.

We congratulate the Director-General on what has been achieved and we particularly congratulate him on the role that he has carved out for the ILO, in particular within the G20. We also share the views presented in his Report, *A new era of social justice*.

We need to have the courage to learn from this crisis, which, for many countries and hundreds of millions of people affected by unemployment, precariousness and even poverty, is far from over. Dogmas and the interests of creditors and shareholders hinder the implementation of policies that focus on the development of the real economy.

Respect for the environment is seriously threatened by global warming and catastrophes such as Fukushima. The reduction of inequalities and social imbalances is also under threat. Our societies, both in the North and the South, have to change their development model. We need economic growth whose fruits are shared more equally and are more respectful of the limited natural resources that constitute the very basis of our planet's survival.

Globalization that treats these balances with disdain is going to be a source of conflict, catastrophe and irreparable damage. We need a globalization with a stronger social dimension and who better than the ILO, with its tripartite structure, to actively promote this approach?

In this regard, I would like to thank Ms Bachelet, who chaired the committee working on this issue, for her commitment. I will mention three fundamental axes which seem to me to be very important for this development phase. First of all, employment: unemployment continues to wreak devastation; the lives of millions of young people from Tunisia and Egypt, countries whose brave youth with a passion for democracy deserve our support, to Greece, Portugal and Spain, and also Africa and further afield, are at risk of being shattered. This is not acceptable.

We need to take their indignation seriously. We need to adapt our budgetary and macroeconomic policies in order to respond effectively to this economic mess and this destabilizing drama.

Austerity policies applied in an indiscriminatory manner might placate creditors, but can only plunge these countries into an ongoing recession and widespread impoverishment. The world needs considerable investment to create employment but also to meet our basic needs and manage ecological challenges. Why do credit rating agencies, so worried about the interests of the financial world, not get even slightly worried about social stability in these countries and the fate of the sacrificed generations?

Second: the place and value of labour. Labour must not be considered as just any other commodity. We have decent work if we have rights such as the right to a wage that allows for a decent standard of living. We are often very far from that, in particular when the precariousness that prevents workers from leading their lives is increasingly the norm.

Respect for the health and safety of workers is one of the main aims of the ILO. Work on this should be continued, in particular through the estab-

lishment of effective labour inspections with real powers, and the right and freedom for workers to defend their interests and their dignity.

Third: the implementation and consolidation of social protection systems. This is one of the main themes of this 100th Conference and it is at the heart of a fairer globalization, as 75–80 per cent of the global population does not have any social protection for illness, accident or old age. We must engage with these issues.

Some countries in the South have made major progress in this regard, but there is a danger that some developed countries, in particular those confronted with a debt crisis, will dismantle their social security systems.

I would like to draw attention to the conclusions of the Committee for the Recurrent Discussion on Social Protection, chaired by the Ambassador of Luxembourg, which should make this Conference a real focus for the creation of a common basis of social rights and social protection. That is important for this era of justice that we so wish for and that the world needs.

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Mr MC LEOD (*Government, Trinidad and Tobago*)

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I join with others in congratulating the President on his election and in paying tribute to this venerable Organization, which has remained unshakeable against the winds of economic and social change. Workers today, all of us, continue to benefit from the accumulated efforts of many.

The contribution of the ILO and its constituents to the welfare and dignity of the worker cannot and should not be understated. Despite the fact that many still do not fully appreciate the value of our work, we, the members, are bound by a shared responsibility to continue to strive for efficiency gains and sustainable employment that take the welfare of the worker into consideration.

As we surge ahead in this age of technology that is reforming the world of work, the legacy of this Organization, established in 1919, demands nothing less of us than to ensure that the human face and voice of the worker do not recede from development deliberations. On this historic occasion of the 100th Session of this Conference, it is therefore to our credit that discussions have been held on decent work for domestic workers, labour administration and social protection.

I commend the Director-General on his Report and endorse the view that, as we build on the green shoots of economic recovery, a new era of social justice must emerge.

Trinidad and Tobago, a small developing country, continues to hold steadfast to its commitment to people-centred development and the promotion of decent work. Since my assumption of duty a year ago as Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development, we have been re-engineering our programmes to respond more effectively to the needs of employers, workers, persons who are seeking employment and those who wish to establish micro-enterprises and small businesses.

Within the context of the framework for sustainable development of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, we have partnered with the people for whom policies are being developed and implemented.

I am particularly pleased to highlight the following achievements: an increase of 38 per cent in the minimum wage; the establishment of an HIV/AIDS

advocacy and sustainability centre, the first of its kind in our region, for the implementation of the national HIV/AIDS workplace policy; the reintroduction of national skills training and apprenticeship programmes to reduce youth unemployment and social inequity; the development of a draft policy for the establishment of community-based business incubators; stakeholder consultations on labour legislation, cooperative development, public employment services, labour market information, enterprise development and decent work priorities for Trinidad and Tobago; and the decentralization of the Ministry's services and the expansion of the outreach programme through electronic media and the Internet.

Work is also in progress for finalizing a decent work policy and programme of action for Trinidad and Tobago and updating labour legislation, in particular for maternity protection and workmen's compensation.

We have recorded some progress in reducing decent work deficits, but much remains to be done.

In this new era of social justice, due regard must be paid to the more vulnerable in our global society. If we are to effectively promote social justice, the onus must be on all of us to work together for development and to ensure that welfare gains and prosperity are within the reach of every worker everywhere. Reducing core elements of injustice such as poverty, discrimination, inequality and unsafe working conditions should not be a singular effort.

Trinidad and Tobago welcomes the discussions on south and triangular cooperation. It is my fervent hope that additional mechanisms can be developed to facilitate exchanges of information, best practices and expertise to support our respective decent work activities. We are called upon to join hands as we forge ahead in creating a society where people work in dignity and do a fair day's work for a fair day's wage.

As we begin to reap the benefits of the green shoots of recovery from the financial and economic crisis, we must be ever mindful that our goal should be prosperity for all. In this regard, policy coherence and decisive timely action will be critical to the effective pursuit of our development objectives.

As a newly elected titular member of the Governing Body, Trinidad and Tobago is committed to service. I wish to express our profound appreciation for the overwhelming support for our candidature and to acknowledge the strong bonds of friendship that exist between our country and so many represented here. We look forward to working with our colleagues over the 2011–14 triennium as we fulfil our individual and collective responsibilities.

In closing, I wish to express our gratitude to the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean for its unstinting support of our decent work initiatives.

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Mr YITZHAKY (*Government, Israel*)

I extend my hearty congratulations to the Director-General for the many efforts invested in this 100th Session of the International Labour Conference.

During that period, the Organization has taken the lead in laying the foundation of rules and standards in the world of employment. The values and policies deriving from this should indeed lead us to a much better world.

I would also like to congratulate the Director-General on a clear and instructive Report, *A new era of social justice*, which is based on the decent work principle that has been guiding us. Its importance is increasingly made clear to us in this globalized world.

A positive spirit of cooperation exists in Israel between the workers' and employers' organizations, and this has led to many benefits, both for the national economy and for the workers and employers of Israel. The results of such cooperation are apparent in Israel's system of labour relations. We are witnessing an "industrial peace" that has lasted for several years thanks to the beneficial and continuing discourse for which the heads of the organizations can claim credit.

This industrial peace is expressed and measured in the minimal level of strike action – in terms of the number of strikes, the number of participants, and the number of working days lost.

Another outcome of this collaboration is the collective agreement on raising the minimum wage in order to improve employees' wages and narrow the gaps between different groups of workers.

The Government has also joined in these initiatives, and has accepted the minimum wage agreement with a view to formalizing it generally in legislation and applying it in the national economy.

In its policies, Israel is trying to bring about the social justice to which the Director-General refers in his Report. For example, the Government is taking action to combat poverty, encourage employment and reduce social gaps. We are doing so, inter alia, by the use of two important tools: new legislation to raise the minimum wage, as mentioned, and the application of earned income tax credit in the economy for low-wage earners.

Another subject that has been discussed at this session of the Conference is social security. In Israel, currently, there is a second tier of pension insurance based on a general collective agreement which was extended by an order of the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labour. This mandatory pension insurance is also being upgraded to provide optimal benefits to this second-tier pension for all employees in the national economy.

Israel has succeeded in emerging from the financial and employment crisis. Indeed, the available data point to an increase in the rate of growth and a significant reduction in unemployment. Moreover, there are corresponding indications of good employment data combined with a growing participation rate in the labour force.

On behalf of the Government of Israel, I would like to conclude with a word of appreciation for the work of the ILO which has now, for 100 sessions, been performing the task of protecting workers' rights. As a partner in these efforts, Israel will continue to assimilate the values that have been shaped in this place through constant collaboration between the Government and the social partners.

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Mr SAKURADA (*Worker, Japan*)

On behalf of the Japanese Trade Union Confederation, RENGO, it is a great honour for me to take the floor at this historic 100th Session of the International Labour Conference.

I wish to express sincere gratitude for the support and sympathy given to our nation from all over the world following the earthquake and tsunami. It takes some more time to recover; this natural disas-

ter showed us the importance of mutual aid among people and the coexistence of nature and mankind on earth.

In addition to the earthquake, the nuclear accident in Fukushima created fear in the international society. We duly note that this nuclear power plant problem is not only a problem for our country but also for the world. Therefore, we will commit, as trade unions, to addressing this critical issue.

We welcome the Report of the Director-General, *A new era of social justice*. As the Report states, the ILO has the conviction to realize social justice, and we share the same objective.

Social justice is far from being applied to all workers in Japan. Since 1948, fundamental labour rights in the public sector have been restricted. Therefore, RENGO views the restoration of fundamental rights as a priority issue and has lodged complaints with the Committee on Freedom of Association.

After the long struggle, today we can report that this issue is developing in a positive way. On 3 June, the Japanese Government adopted, in the Cabinet, the Bill on the Civil Service Reform Law. This Bill provides for the right to collective agreements, which is highly appreciated as a step towards the possibility of the restoration of fundamental rights.

But, this is still a Bill, and we are paying close attention to see if it is adopted by the Diet. Also, I would like to add that the Bill is not perfect because it is unclear on whether fire defence personnel have the right to organize and it restricts the right to strike for employees in the public sector as a whole. We strongly hope that the Japanese Government lets employees in the public sector fully enjoy the fundamental labour rights stipulated in international labour standards.

I would like to touch upon the global economic crisis. The G20 leaders have committed to putting “quality employment at the heart of the recovery”. It is obvious that they have not lived up to this promise, as the Director-General’s Report points out. Member States and concerned international organizations should collaborate closely and coherently to ensure better economic policies so that the output of growth is distributed to all people, inclusively.

With increasing globalization, the issues we face are closely interrelated. We are facing the challenge of realizing a sustainable society that offers the possibility of decent employment to all, without discrimination and poverty. For this purpose, the ILO has many important roles to play, and one of the most significant is setting international standards and enhancing the supervisory mechanism. That is my understanding.

I strongly hope that the Governing Body will consider the standard-setting items as a priority in its discussions on Conference agenda-setting, to match the needs of a new era. The efficiency of the ILO is dependent on tripartism. That means that all social partners should play their own roles.

We, trade unions, will support ILO activities, together with our social partners, in taking the lead in decent work for all and real social justice for a new era.

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Mr THAILUAN (*Worker, Thailand*)

The situation with regard to the fair treatment of workers in Thailand has improved. The Govern-

ment has taken the issue more seriously. For example, legislation has been introduced to prevent the unfair treatment of workers, measures to prevent child labour, and restrictions on sex media.

Forced and abusive labour has been eliminated in Thailand. However, severe human rights and labour rights violations persist. These violations are committed by multinational companies that invest in Thailand, and foreign companies that establish joint ventures with Thai partners. Such cases most commonly involve violations of freedom of association, freedom of negotiation, and inhumane working conditions. Although workers have tried to establish a mutual understanding with employers, the situation seems to be deteriorating because these companies still receive support from big conglomerates in their home countries.

A serious case that has aroused strong interest recently involves a company called the Nissin Brake Ltd. The company, which is a joint venture between Japanese and Thai investors, employs 818 workers. It is located in the Nakorn Rachasima province of Thailand. Nissin produces parts such as calliper brakes, master power brakes, body knuckles, master clutches and drum brakes for carmakers such as Honda, Mitsubishi, Isuzu and General Motors. It also produces motorcycle parts for Honda, Yamaha, Kawasaki and Suzuki. It should be noted that Nissin’s clients are leading Japanese automobile makers, which all have excellent records with regard to the treatment of workers. They do not violate human rights or labour rights, such as the right to associate or to negotiate, or use child labour. They have complied strictly with laws and regulations of the countries in which they have invested. They allow labour associations and support the tripartite system. These companies have long been well-accepted by workers in Thailand.

Unfortunately, a certain event paints a different picture. On 24 January 2011, 15 workers from Nissin Brake Ltd gathered to establish a labour union under the Labour Relation Act 1974 (BE 2518), which gives workers the right to form a union. Later, the union elected 22 committee members and informed the Japanese, as well as their Thai employers, of their existence – in writing.

The union submitted a request to the employer for an increase in wages, from their relatively low initial level, an increase in welfare for both male and female workers, and an improvement in working conditions, as workers suffered from exposure to extreme heat, dirt and hazardous chemicals. However, the management of Nissin Brake Ltd refused to negotiate with the workers and suddenly announced the dismissal of all 22 committee members without any explanation or evidence of any wrongdoing. The management announced that the company could not accept the labour union, or their request. They were aware that such action was unlawful.

The workers had filed a complaint with the Labour Relations Committee, which demanded the company to re-hire the workers. Nissin refused to comply. The company believed that it was well-protected, as it was part of Honda, Mitsubishi, Isuzu, GM, Yamaha, Kawasaki and Suzuki. It was of the opinion that this breach of the law, and violation of workers’ human rights, would have no impact, as it worked with big Japanese conglomerates.

Workers in Thailand cannot understand why reputable companies like Honda, Mitsubishi, Isuzu, GM,

Yamaha, Kawasaki, and Suzuki have cooperated with Nissin to seriously violate the human and labour rights. I would therefore like to ask Honda, Mitsubishi, Isuzu, GM, Yamaha, Kawasaki, Suzuki to immediately end their relationship with Nissin Brake, and not accept any more supplies from Nissin until that company fully complies with Thai labour legislation, stops violating human and labour rights, follows the orders of the Labour Relations Committee, complies with the International Labour Organization's Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), and re-hires those workers. I also would like to ask the ILO Office in Thailand to set up a committee to investigate the case, to ensure fair treatment for Thai workers.

Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation. I shall report on progress to the Conference in the future.

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Mr KSERA (*Government, Albania*)

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It is my pleasure to take part in these proceedings, which mark the 100th Session of the International Labour Conference. In the name of the Albanian Government, I want to congratulate all the participants and wish further success to the ILO in our work together, when facing new challenges in the years to come.

I also want to congratulate the President of the Conference for his election and for leading this session. Moreover, I take the opportunity to congratulate Mr Juan Somavia for his efforts and achievements as Director-General of the International Labour Office and express my belief that these accomplishments will be deepened in the future.

The focus of today's plenary session is social justice, an issue which has universal dimensions, because as the recent economic and social developments have shown, we have undertaken jointly the creation of a new era of social justice. This has encouraged the Albanian Government to step up its efforts towards the implementation of employment rights and especially fundamental freedoms at work. In cooperation with the ILO, the Albanian Government has ratified the core Conventions and is seriously engaged in their implementation.

Our commitment to develop common policies is based on the need for stable economic growth, employment, welfare and social protection. This obviously requires extensive cooperation with and the consensus of employers' and workers' organizations. These objectives cannot be achieved without the active participation of the social partners. The promotion and development of social dialogue is key to ensuring sustainable social peace.

The signing this year of the Tripartite Social Understanding Pact between employers, unions and the Albanian Government is evidence of the willingness to strengthen social dialogue and partnership and our joint commitment in that regard.

I would now like to take this opportunity to mention in brief some of the remarkable efforts of the Albanian Government to promote sustainable economic and social development that is balanced and oriented towards the implementation of decent work, which constitutes the basis of social justice.

In the context of its Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Programme, the Albanian Government has increased public investments, mainly in infrastructure. Furthermore, the programme has cre-

ated a favourable climate for foreign and domestic investment by reducing legal and administrative barriers. Agriculture and tourism are also Government priorities, because these sectors count on a significant active labour force. One of the goals in this regard is to preserve existing jobs and create new ones and to promote the regional development of rural areas; this will lead directly to improvements in the quality of life and economic welfare.

As a result of the Government's fiscal policies, the Albanian economy has shown progress and is coping with the crisis that was facing the world economy. In 2010, the economy recorded a growth of 3.9 per cent. Given the fact that employment is the main challenge of any society, the Albanian Government has taken into account the recommendations of international institutions such as the World Bank, the International Labour Organization and the European Union. The main objective of the Albanian Government, to which it is committed, is to reduce unemployment by 0.3–0.4 per cent annually and to increase employment by 1.9–2.2 per cent annually.

The two main social protection schemes in Albania are the Economic Assistance Programme, which is the main social welfare scheme providing benefits to target poverty, and a programme providing benefits for disability. Expenditure on disability benefits increased from 0.4 per cent of GDP in 2000 to 0.9 per cent of GDP in 2008.

As a result of the policies taken by the Albanian Government, the level of absolute poverty decreased by 27 per cent. Extreme poverty, defined as a percentage of poor people who are living on less than the required minimum of US\$1 per day, decreased to 1.2 per cent in 2008, compared to 3.5 per cent in 2005 and 4.7 per cent in 2002. Average consumption per capita increased by 25 per cent in 2010 as compared to 2002.

The Government has worked to increase wages at rates higher than inflation and to support sustainable economic growth. Priority is also being given to the low wage growth. Over the past five years, the average salary for public sector employers increased by about 67 per cent, while the salaries of teachers, doctors and nurses have doubled.

In conclusion, I would like once again to congratulate the ILO for organizing this very important event and hope that the cooperation between us continues at these levels even in the future so that we can make a joint contribution to the further development and strengthening of social dialogue between our countries.

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*Original Russian: Ms ABDYKALIKOVA (Minister of Labour and Social Protection, Kazakhstan)*

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Allow me to congratulate you on the 100th Session of the International Labour Conference, and to note the timeliness of the Report of the Director-General, Mr Somavia, *A new era of social justice*, which calls on countries to make a political contribution to guaranteeing decent work.

During the Conference, a major event has taken place. Kazakhstan was elected substitute member of the Governing Body of the ILO. On behalf of the Government of Kazakhstan, I would like to express our deep gratitude to the group of Eastern European countries for their support. We take this initiative as a confirmation of our country's achievements and potential in the international political arena.



The year 2011 is the 20th anniversary of Kazakhstan's independence. In accordance with the Decree of President Nazarbayev, this anniversary is being celebrated under the motto "Twenty years of peace and creation". This historical event is the result of the hopes and longings of many generations of Kazakh people.

In the short period of its independent history, our country has turned into a modern, competitive state which has successfully implemented large-scale reforms in various areas of society. Decisions that have been taken to go over to a market economy, adopt non-nuclear status, and others, have been proved to be effective and well-founded.

Our country is positioning itself as a major player in strengthening security in Central Asia. It has successfully chaired the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the Astana Summit, as well as the Organisation of the Islamic Conference. These and many other initiatives indicate the authority of our country in the international arena.

Together with the ILO, we are continuing to implement the ILO Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) for 2010–12.

The experience of overcoming the consequences of the crisis in 2009–10 has shown the effectiveness of the package of anti-crisis measures that have been adopted. The Government has adopted measures to implement the strategy for regional employment, income support and social support for low-income families.

We have maintained all our social commitments, and there have been further increases in social benefits for all categories of the population. In 2010, government spending on social benefits and social support stood at US\$5.7 billion. According to the preliminary assessments, real GDP growth in 2010 stood at 7 per cent, unemployment fell to 5.5 per cent by the end of 2010, average per capita income rose in real terms by 6.3 per cent and real wages by 7.5 per cent, with inflation at 7.8 per cent.

In the long-term perspective, the priority is still human development. This is the basic goal and a prerequisite for progress.

In this regard, it is now essential to adapt the employment policy to the target economic growth rate, which means moving from short-term reactive measures to a long-term policy.

Taking this into account, as well as the labour market requirements set out in the industrialization plan, the Government has adopted a new employment programme for the period up to 2020. Its main goal is to increase the level of income of the population through sustainable and productive employment. It will be aimed primarily at the self-employed, the unemployed and low-income population categories.

The programme comprises three main areas. First of all, vocational training leading to employment. Secondly, help for people starting up their own business especially in rural areas. Third, when there are no prospects of employment or for business development at local level, the programme will enable individuals to move to more developed regions. This will contribute to improving the mobility of the workforce. The Government will set aside 40 billion tenge for this purpose, and approximately 100 billion the following year. By 2016, the Government plans that the programme should cover up to 1.5 million persons. The goal is to reduce the rate of

poverty in the country to 6 per cent and hold unemployment to 5.5 per cent or below.

The Government of Kazakhstan shares the concerns of the delegates of the Conference that the knock-on effect of the crisis may undermine the well-being of many workers and their families, and endorses the call for a new era of social justice. Measures are needed, based on social dialogue, in order to create large numbers of new jobs. And we need measures to increase labour productivity, to strengthen social protection and ensure income stability.

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*Original Spanish: Mr DE MENDIGUREN (Employer, Argentina)*

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As President of the Industrial Union of Argentina, it is an honour for me to address this assembly once again. Ten years ago, I led the Employers' delegation in the context of the grave crisis affecting my country at that time.

Today, Argentina has made an impressive recovery, in both economic and social terms. This recovery is an achievement for all Argentine citizens, who have demonstrated a great capacity to generate wealth when growth is the driving force. Argentina is an industrial country and, as such, has significant productive and technological potential.

I would like to welcome the President of the Conference and express my special thanks to the Director-General, Mr Juan Somavia for the support he lent our country in such difficult circumstances and during the entire process that followed the crisis.

In the wake of this experience, the 2008 international financial crisis was nothing new for us and, once again, we all joined forces, Government, workers and employers, to face and overcome this crisis.

Mr President, the Report of the Director-General refers to the impact of the financial crisis on the real economy and proposes certain avenues to map out a strategy for the future. We feel that there cannot be any "one size fits all" solution, rather each country has its own reality and, based on this reality, it must craft its own strategy to meet its own needs. This is where the challenges lie and our efforts must be focused.

I should like to comment on the issues addressed by the Director-General in his Report.

Firstly, the State plays an essential, irreplaceable role in times of crisis. Above all, when circumstances take on the magnitude that they have in the recent international crisis, or in Argentina's crisis, to which I referred earlier and which occurred a decade ago.

State action is also fundamental in boosting private initiative and entrepreneurship and supporting active policies to create enterprises and jobs. Here, we are not talking about replacement but rather co-operation for development.

Secondly, it is clear that the State plays a role in strengthening protective networks to help the jobless, assisting them in re-entering the job market well-equipped and helping them to cope with the new realities of production that will exist once the crisis is over.

Clearly, a combination of macroeconomic and social measures will be required in order to overcome the crisis. However, above all, it is essential to turn recovery into growth and, even more importantly, then to turn that growth into sustainable development.

In our case, we believe and hope that Argentina can be a country with a financial system that serves production – a modern and intelligent state with responsible and creative employers, workers with quality jobs and high wages, leaders who are capable of expressing demands through dialogue. All of these are integral parts of our vision and our commitment. In the final analysis, we believe in an economy of production and of speculation.

The Industrial Union of Argentina constantly promotes tripartite dialogue between workers, employers and the Government, on the basis of concrete goals. We believe in the need to ensure that sustainable firms and decent work are compatible and also the creation of companies and generation of employment, productivity and competitiveness. We do not believe in the logic of confrontation. We recognize the role of trade unions and we trust that they will shoulder their responsibilities just as we do as employers.

The right to strike is a legitimate and inalienable right in any mature democracy. Yet, we cannot justify conflict for conflict's sake, or abuses that can give rise to illegal acts.

To conclude, in our country we have to overcome major problems. One of these is the issue of capital and work or, to be a little more explicit, the false dichotomy that could divide workers and employers. We should bear in mind that, without wages, there can be no market and without the market there cannot be any quality investment capable of transforming the productive system. At the same time, we must not forget that salaries are also a production cost, particularly in labour-intensive sectors. Consequently, we must strengthen the positive circle of salaries, productivity, innovation, domestic market and investment.

In Argentina today, more than ever before, we must coordinate our efforts by means of tripartite dialogue, with distributive goals and concrete objectives that ensure the compatibility of investment with redistribution. I firmly believe that we have to work together, rather than confront each other. Together with the Government and the workers, we are capable of transforming the productive and social system of our country and, in the final analysis, setting our country firmly on the path to development.

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*Original Spanish: Mr ÁVILA ORDÓÑEZ (Secretary of State, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Honduras)*

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Honduras has experienced one of the most serious socio-political challenges in the last 30 years, in the midst of an international financial crisis which has impacted on the economic development of the nation and the generation of new employment opportunities.

In its first year of administration, the Government has worked hard to consolidate constructive, inclusive and committed dialogue under an administration of national unity and reconciliation. Dialogue has been based on respect and the promotion of labour rights, democratic consolidation, and internal stability – among other aspects – in order to achieve sustainable social and economic development.

One central element in the revitalization of the economy and the generation of employment has been Government action to boost policies which foster investment as an element for eradicating poverty and generating mechanisms which guarantee

increased incomes for the population in the short-term.

At this 100th Session of the International Labour Conference, we can say that the path has not been easy but we have made progress. Economic growth in the country at the end of 2010 was 2.8 per cent, as a result of the national political crisis and the international financial situation. However, because of the efforts of the current Government, this year we are moving towards a strengthened national economy and higher levels of economic growth have been forecast.

Three initiatives are vital in this regard. First of all, the vision of the country for the period 2010–38 and the State plan for the period 2010–22. These were agreed with civil society, at the initiative of the Government. These instruments guide the planned coordination of the implementation of measures designed to strengthen the most vulnerable social sectors, including the promotion and respect of gender equality.

Secondly, we adopted the National Plan for the Promotion of Investment, in order to create private investment conditions that would lead to a reduction in poverty and employment generation. At the “Honduras, open for business” event, President Don Porfirio Lobo Sosa, accompanied by the Presidents of the National Congress and the Supreme Court of Justice, stated that social justice and long-lasting peace were based on harmony between labour and capital, to the benefit of everybody.

Thirdly, we are implementing a national social welfare strategy, with the long-term objective of increasing universal social security and pensions coverage.

The Government Plan 2010–14 is generating strategies which will focus on promoting employment for social groups, encouraging the creation of projects such as the national employment service in Honduras.

As the Director-General of the ILO said in his Report, the percentage of vulnerable workers is increasing, which means a backward step with regard to the positive trends observed over the past few years. This is precisely what the National Programme for Employment Creation, supported by the Office of the President of the Republic, is trying to combat. The most recent national programme on hourly work is supported by a law incorporating the observations of the ILO issued by the legislative power following tripartite discussions. These programmes contain specific policies designed to improve the situation for young people, in terms of training, permanent employment, etc.

Honduras welcomes the adoption of the Convention on domestic work in a constructive environment and in a spirit of consensus.

The Convention is extremely important because it establishes standards in the area of the informal economy and it has an impact concerning the very sensitive issue of migration. It also addresses the issue of gender.

It is important to point out that, since 1971, through the application of the Freedom of Association and the Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), we have recognized the legal status of the first and only trade union of domestic workers.

Social security systems are vital to welfare policy and should be boosted. Effective labour administra-

tion is crucial in ensuring the protection of workers, social security, employment services and the development of labour policies and standards which contribute to a culture of dialogue and confidence.

We reaffirm the fact that social dialogue coordination and consensus among social partners are extremely important in moving towards a future ratification of the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144). These tripartite instruments are also important for the ratification of the Employment Service Convention, 1948 (No. 88), and the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102). Ratification of these Conventions is a top priority for our Government.

More than ever, we think it is extremely important that ILO policies should contribute to creating a world with less tension, greater justice and greater security. We recognize the role of the ILO in promoting tripartism, as well as in contributing, together with other international actors, to the promotion of the economic and financial stability which generate decent work.

I would like to point out that, when we decide on our future policies, we should recognize that the international political stage is changing rapidly. Against the background of this uncertain future, Honduras will continue along its path towards sustainable development, strengthening democracy, bearing in mind the principle that peace and social justice are inseparable.

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Mr ROŽMAN (*Government, Croatia*)

It is a great pleasure to address this 100th Session of the International Labour Conference and to give our support to the strengthening and promotion of decent work and its underlying principles, not only in Croatia but also worldwide.

The Republic of Croatia welcomes the recent recommendation by the European Commission to close accession talks with Croatia, which is to become the 28th Member State of the European Union on 1 July 2013. Croatia's success story in negotiations continues to be a strong incentive for all the countries of south-eastern Europe on their European path. The European perspectives of all countries in the region are highly important for the region's stability, which Croatia continues to support firmly.

A number of international documents referring to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and sustainable development are directly related to decent work and require greater engagement of all stakeholders, especially now, at a time of economic crisis and recovery.

When it comes to the promotion of decent work in the Republic of Croatia, we first consider creating conditions for higher employment in an environment that encourages the creation of new productive jobs and social security conditions for all citizens, taking into account basic social risks such as age, illness, disability, unemployment and poverty.

In the Republic of Croatia, under the concept of decent work, special attention is given to the area of employment, paying particular attention to the relatively high rates of unemployment and the visible lack of a high percentage of the economically active population. We also face a very unfavourable ratio of employees to retired persons. Increasing the number of employees is therefore a priority in our strategies, particular in terms of resolving the problem of youth unemployment, which requires even

more of our efforts in order to develop measures that will facilitate young people's access to the labour market.

Croatia has a high rate of unemployment among young people, amounting to almost 25 per cent of overall unemployment. In our strategic documents, young people are identified as a particularly vulnerable group for whom there is a whole series of active labour market policy measures aimed at integration into the labour market. Specific measures also exist for career guidance, additional training, and timely and personalized support. Acquiring necessary work experience is one of the very important aspects of our active employment policy.

The crisis, the reduction in employment and the fight for new jobs should by no means be abused as a reason to abolish all those conditions that go to make decent work. On the contrary, because of the crisis and unfavourable situations, even more should be done to guarantee the principles of decent work. Therefore, we emphasize that we need to insist on the principles of material and legal protection and safety of workers and material security of unemployed people by adapting the whole system to take account of the aging population. We also need to adjust social security to the new gender balance, creating an environment that will enable all individuals to reconcile their business and family priorities.

Particular attention should be paid to ensuring material security for employees, primarily meaning wages, which ensure a dignified life for workers and their families. Besides ensuring this during collective negotiations and formalizing it in collective agreements, the minimum wage in Croatia is guaranteed by the Act on the minimum wage.

Social consensus is very important when it comes to the issue of wages. In Croatia, we have experienced the problem of non-payment of wages in a number of cases. We are referring here to the specific problem of wages unpaid by employers who are not bankrupt, because in cases of bankruptcy there is a fund to protect workers' claims. In this respect, many activities are being undertaken by all the social partners in order to solve the problem.

In order to secure decent work, it is necessary to ensure the active cooperation of all social partners, i.e. social partnership based on primary principles, as well as successful cooperation with the whole of civil society.

Over the last year, Croatia has seen stagnation in relations between the social partners, but now social partnership is at a much higher level. The above activities regarding unpaid wages were the result of trade union initiatives, along with excellent and productive cooperation between trade unions, employers and the Government.

Social partnership can and should be the mechanism that will ensure decent work, change conditions, improve balance and eventually improve rights. But I would also like to stress that responsible social partnership must mean the willingness of all social partners to accept difficult but necessary measures. So I would say, in terms of decent work, social partnership is a *sine qua non*, a condition without which it cannot be achieved, and where each of the social partners fully accepts its share of responsibility.

(*Mr Hossu takes the Chair.*)

Let me share with you some facts on the socio-economic situation in Pakistan, which have a good deal to do with the achievement of workers' rights and the observance of recognized standards at the workplace.

The Government of Pakistan has been struggling hard to meet the socio-economic challenges arising out of food, water and energy shortages. Last year we experienced unexpected challenges in the form of a devastating flood that caused huge losses to our GDP by damaging our crops, livestock and physical infrastructure.

Despite all these challenges, the Government of Pakistan has worked hard for the socio-economic well-being of our people and taken decisions to stabilize the country's economy, generate growth, create jobs and improve the quality of life of the people. Pakistan has achieved a modest growth rate, although much below its potential. Its performance reflects the enormous resilience of the economy, which has been tested by one crisis after another, beginning with the 2005 earthquake.

Pakistan is the world's sixth most populated country. With an estimated population of 177.10 million, the unemployment rate is 5.6 per cent. Productive employment is a major challenge because of declining economic growth, a struggling formal sector and an expanding informal sector. Manufacturing for export and for domestic consumption has been hard hit by threats to law and order and by an acute power shortage. This has resulted in the loss of working hours, loss of jobs and rising production costs. The situation constitutes a challenge to catering for the needs of the labour force in terms of decent work. In the existing scenario, the Government is struggling hard to meet the challenges in the field of labour and is doing its best to meet the aspirations of the working class.

We strongly believe in promoting the fundamental values of freedom, human dignity, social justice, security and non-discrimination as instruments of sustainable economic and social development. We warmly welcome the decision to place on the agenda of the Conference the decisions relating to the strategic objectives of social protection and the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization.

We believe that it is time to engage in that dialogue with a view to inculcating the sense of responsibility in those concerned with promoting sustainable job creation, sharing the benefits of growth with those who produce it and instituting a social protection floor. An institutional mechanism is needed to ensure that everyone enjoys a decent life and fair access to basic social rights, services and facilities. We must devise the means of ensuring greater social and economic sustainability and a fairer distribution of wealth.

Equally important is to devise institutional mechanisms and enabling conditions for translating economic development into social progress, poverty reduction and prosperity. We need to take stock of our efforts at the national and international levels to achieve our agreed goal of extending social security to all. It is important to assess how far we have been able to achieve this objective and what else has to be done to this end. This requires our wholehearted efforts and all our sincerity.

In Pakistan we have taken a number of steps towards the well-being of workers, despite the difficult situation. The welfare of the working class is a focal point of our labour policy. We have a number of programmes under way, notably an old-age pension scheme that will provide old-age pension, invalidity pensions, survivors' pensions and old-age grants to millions of workers, on which we are spending billions of rupees every year.

The Government of Pakistan has established a workers' welfare fund to provide housing facilities, health facilities, marriage grants and scholarships for the education of workers' children at the highest level. The social security system is also being improved to provide maximum social safety benefits and protection to industrial workers.

Another important area on which we are placing greater emphasis is the welfare and development of marginalized groups of the society, such as women workers, home-based workers and working children. We are in the process of developing a national policy on home-based workers with the basic objective of providing them with social protection. The policy's objectives are to recognize home-based workers and their right to be covered by legislative and administrative provisions on an equal footing with other workers, to adopt an institutional approach to their needs, concerns and demands, and to ensure gender mainstreaming at every level.

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*Original Spanish: Ms NAVARRO LIANOS (Government, Plurinational State of Bolivia)*

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The Government of President Evo Morales Ayma is the result of 15 years of social and popular resistance by indigenous peoples and workers in the face of the neo-liberal policies of the transnational elite which was formerly in power. President Evo gained valuable experience during his time as a trade union activist campaigning for rural workers. At that time he opposed the foreign military presence in our country. Moreover, the current Government programme that we are implementing is inspired by the popular organizations of the workers, rural dwellers and indigenous peoples of the Plurinational State of Bolivia. Our government is one of social movements.

The establishment of a constituent assembly, the nationalization of oil and gas, the autonomous state regime, the defence of Mother Earth, the reversal of the neo-liberalization of the labour market and the de-colonization of the State are all part of the Government's programme and form the backbone of the new State and the new economy which are being constructed in Bolivia. All of these projects are the work of labour assemblies, workers' trade unions and indigenous farmers' communities throughout the country.

The cabinet and most of the national parliamentarians, and regional mayors are workers, rural dwellers, indigenous leaders and leaders of the worker movement who, together with professionals, have taken over the management of the State.

Former leaders of the Bolivian Central of Workers (COB), who used to be persecuted and locked up by dictatorships, are now Ministers of State, members of assemblies and mayors. This has made possible the drafting of a new political Constitution of the State adopted by a universal vote in January 2009, which includes a chapter on social labour and economic rights. The Constitution enshrines the right to organize, trade union immunity, the right to

strike, the right to collective bargaining and to decent work, labour stability, equal pay for men and women for similar work, and the inalienability of workers' rights, among other rights.

One of the first measures to assist salaried workers that the Government of President Evo Morales took in 2006 was to repeal the regulation allowing for workers to be "freely" hired and dismissed without the right to social benefits, which is the basis of policies of liberalization and precarity of employment. Thus, the labour bonuses abolished under neo-liberal management were reintroduced, along with the rights of pregnant women and their partners.

Subcontracting was prohibited, the concept of length of service was introduced for those who have worked more than 90 consecutive days, non-discrimination was enshrined in legislation, along with the compulsory registration of employers and the prohibition of all forms of non-compliance with labour standards. Furthermore, procedures were established regarding compulsory payments to workers who have completed five consecutive years of employment, among other things.

In turn, the nationalization of strategic companies in the areas of oil and gas, mining, electricity and telecommunications has made it possible to increase the number of unionized workers by recruiting personnel to work for State companies. The recruitment of more than 5,000 workers at the enterprises Minera Huanuni, Karachipampa Yacimientos Petroliferos Fiscales Bolivianos (YPFB), Empresa Nacional de Electricidad, Empresa Nacional de Fundiciones (ENAF), el Mut  n led to a huge increase in the number of unionized workers.

The Government, which rose out of the social movements, has respected the will of the workers and the statutes of each trade union organization, recognizing 1,717 trade union organizations between 2006 and 2010. The Government has also begun to give back to the workers the assets of trade unions previously expropriated by the neo-liberal administrations, as well as supporting the construction of 174 trade union offices for various social organizations at a national, department and regional level across Bolivia. The Government has also returned over 100 vehicles.

With regard to workers' incomes, the Government of the social movements is carrying out various projects with different sections of the workforce. Rural workers, who make up the majority of workers in the country, now benefit from policies involving the direct transfer of financial, technical and labour resources in order to improve the material conditions of production. Zero interest credits have been allocated and the products of all small producers of cereals are bought at a higher than market price.

In the case of small independent producers in cities, who make up the majority of urban workers, a development bank has been created that grants credit below the rate of normal banks. The aim is to improve the technology and organizational capacity of workshops.

Furthermore, the Government has launched a general policy of boosting internal production and consumption through the direct transfer of financial resources to schoolchildren, persons aged over 60 years and pregnant women.

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Ms BANG ONESENDET (*Employer, Lao People's Democratic Republic*)

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It is a great honour for me to represent the Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI) and for the Lao employers' representatives to take part in this 100th Session of the International Labour Conference.

I fully agree with the report of the Vice-Minister of Labour and Social Welfare of the Lao People's Democratic Republic relating to the implementation of ILO Conventions, labour laws and regulations, and collaboration with the International Labour Organization.

The economic growth of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, with extended international cooperation in accordance with the government policy to promote trade and domestic and international investment, has involved close collaboration of the business sector, which has made efforts to encourage improvements in productivity and product quality in the interests of greater competitiveness in international trade. By implementing the Government's social and economic development plan, the country will graduate from being a least developing country by the year 2020.

To achieve this goal, it calls for support for efforts to build business sector capacity, improve the investment climate, implement the Decent Work Country Programme, and increase average incomes. This will require efforts to further strengthen the business sector.

In addition, the employers have contributed to promoting decent work and improving the skills of the work force. Formal businesses are affiliated to the social security system and also have other welfare arrangements for workers, as well as other regulations to protect workers and promote economic growth.

The LNCCI tries to encourage informal sector enterprises to join the formal sector and adhere to laws and regulations to ensure decent work.

The LNCCI plays an important role in private sector development. We actively participate in all business activities aimed at improving the business environment, safeguarding benefits for members, facilitating trade and attracting more domestic and foreign investment. The LNCCI is also actively participating and coordinating with the other tripartite partners in order to improve labour relations between employers and employees, in areas such as occupational safety and health, human resource development, and skills. Work is being carried out on a tripartite basis on the Decent Work Country Programme for 2011–15 as well as initiatives to raise the minimum wage.

The LNCCI would like to thank the International Labour Organization for its funding and technical support and all its other efforts to help Lao employers and the country as a whole, which have strengthened them in their efforts to provide fair employment and decent work.

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*Original Turkish: Mr KUMLU (Worker, Turkey)*

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I would like to express our deep sorrow regarding the recent disasters that occurred in the world last year, in particular the catastrophic earthquake, tsunami and nuclear radiation leaks in Japan.

I believe that anybody who desires to find solutions to the difficulties people are facing and who wishes to understand the current economic and so-

cial structure should read and benefit from the Report prepared by the Director-General, Juan Somavia, for the 100th Session of the International Labour Conference.

I would like to thank the Director-General and the ILO officers for these detailed Reports, which identify the reasons for the economic and social crisis and provide solutions to them.

The Report of the Director-General, *A new era of social justice*, illustrates a future that we believe is a common dream and desire not only for trade unions but also for humanity as a whole. In fact, the main aim of our struggle is producing social justice in the world and making sure that workers and humanity as a whole benefit from the concept of social justice, as mentioned in the Report.

Creating a new era of social justice is unrealistic, as unemployment, poverty, de-unionization, the informal economy, subcontracting, precarious working conditions and similar phenomena are gradually increasing all around the world.

As the international trade union movement, we voiced our views and demands regarding the post-crisis recovery. However, we were not able to change the course of events. Working conditions and the way in which business is conducted have worsened day by day; inequality has increased and, consequently, disorganization in society has been brought about, along with unhappy workers.

Therefore, investing in jobs, creating employment, overcoming poverty and maintaining sustainable development, together with decent work, should be the primary goals for future governments.

I should like to emphasize that the ILO is the only structure that can contribute to guiding governments towards these goals and, as the Director-General has said, the ILO, with its tripartite structure, has the capacity to succeed.

The second Report of the Director-General, *Equality at work: The continuing challenge*, puts forward in detail trends with regard to discrimination based on sex, race, religious beliefs and political views, together with good practices throughout the world.

Turkey is a social, secular state based on the rule of law. Turk-Is, as it has always been, will be the guardian of our country's values in the future as well. With no doubt, Turk-Is will be in favour of freedom and equal treatment for all citizens.

The problems I pointed out at the 99th Session of the International Labour Conference still prevail in Turkey.

For instance, the problems we face in terms of occupational health and safety have not been eliminated. In order to prevent workplace accidents resulting in death and injuries, legislation should be revised and new regulations should be prepared.

The practice of irregular subcontracting, which has spread all over the country, is used as an instrument for unprotected and low-wage employment. It also creates a serious obstacle to unionization.

Despite the various studies carried out by the ILO, the informal economy continues to be a serious issue. A strategy on the fight against the informal economy must be prepared and monitored in Turkey so as to provide security coverage, unionization rights and decent work and living conditions for all undeclared workers.

The size of the informal economy and the lack of an effective strategy to fight put the burden of social

security expenditure on the shoulders of documented workers.

Owing to violations of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), Turkey has been on the agenda of the Committee on the Application of Standards for years. In Turkey, it has now become impossible to organize at a new workplace.

Despite the various amendments made in the Constitution last year, there are hardly any improvements in Acts Nos 2,821 and 2,822 regulating trade union rights and freedoms in accordance with Convention No. 87 and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98). However, I believe that Turkey will implement those amendments in the wake of the national elections two days ago.

The difficulties faced by public servants with regard to trade union rights are still continuing. Public servants were granted the right to bargain collectively as a result of the constitutional amendments approved by the referendum of 12 September 2010.

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*Original Hungarian: Mr GASKÓ (Worker, Hungary)*

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It is a great honour for me to represent the Hungarian workers at this centenary jubilee session of the Conference. It is also a great pleasure for me to greet the Conference on their behalf.

One of the main tasks of the Conference is to create regulations on decent employment conditions for domestic workers. We think this is an issue of high importance, and we welcome efforts to finally regulate this area, as domestic workers are, by the nature of their employment, one of the most vulnerable employee groups, and a group that cannot be left unprotected. We would be delighted if an agreement were to be reached and recommendations made. The issue is especially relevant for us, as a new law on certain aspects of domestic work has recently been adopted in Hungary. It does not, however, represent progress for the employees concerned, since the law only legalized income from domestic work, but domestic workers are not covered by any labour law, health and safety, or social security regulation. We trust that the agreement to be accepted will also be ratified by Hungary, as an European Union (EU) Member State, and that its principles will be integrated into our national regulations.

Having mentioned the Hungarian situation in the field of domestic work, I must also tell you that, over the past year, several amendments to laws and government measures have been introduced, and several are still being introduced, restricting the rights of employees and trade unions. We are, unfortunately, forced to use this forum to bring up our grievances, as the Government does not operate the institution of social dialogue. Although a system of tripartite interest reconciliation has been developed in Hungary over the past 20 years, the activities of which have also been acknowledged by the ILO, the Government is in the process of dismantling the system at this very moment.

It is well known to all of us that tripartism is one of the ILO's basic principles, not only guiding the Organization's way of operation, but also encouraging its member States to operate tripartite systems in order to strengthen social dialogue. Tripartism, along with the ratification of, and compliance with, ILO Conventions Nos 87 and 98, ensuring the right to organize and freedom of association, are guaran-

tees of social peace. These basic values are suffering in Hungary: an act eliminating the tripartite interest reconciliation forum will soon be adopted, and the right to strike has already been significantly limited in companies providing basic public services. These measures are unacceptable also because their adoption was not preceded by any negotiations with either professional or social partners. The Hungarian parliament has adopted the majority of measures affecting workers on the basis of proposals submitted by individual members of parliament. All this goes against the values of the ILO and the achievements of the social market economy built up in Hungary, and it threatens social peace.

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Mr MULINDWA (*Government, Rwanda*)

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The Government of Rwanda expresses its appreciation for a well articulated Director-General's Report, its principles and values enshrined in social justice, where people's needs, the credibility of public and private policies, dignity at work and the creation of youth employment are timely and pertinent issues.

The Government of Rwanda has put in place an inclusive social security policy. This policy addresses all aspects of social protection, with a special focus on pensions and health care.

This policy is in line with the goals of our Vision 2020, the economic development poverty reduction strategy, and the national employment policy aimed at poverty reduction and social security for all.

The Government of Rwanda is committed to extending social security coverage for Rwandan employees in both the private and the public sector.

The Government has put in place measures to ensure social protection for domestic workers through mutual health insurance schemes and the elimination of all forms of child labour and forced labour within households, through legal and policy actions.

Rwanda's social security policy also reflects our desire to protect and safeguard human life, as expressed in our Constitution and in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, to which Rwanda has subscribed.

Currently, social security coverage comprises two main branches, the pension branch and the occupational hazards branch, with 100 per cent coverage in the formal sector.

The Government of Rwanda aims to have social security coverage for all by 2020, including the informal sector.

I would like to point out that Rwanda is in the final process of establishing a guaranteed minimum wage for each sector.

Rwanda established a mutual health insurance scheme by law in 2007. As a result, more than 92 per cent of the Rwandan population is covered by this insurance, including those in the remotest areas of our country.

The Government of Rwanda is in the process of diversifying social security products to enable employees to acquire social security benefits before their retirement.

A provident fund has been proposed to complement existing pension schemes, so as to support housing schemes, education and maternity insurance schemes to decrease costs incurred by employers during maternity leave. The maternity benefits for workers provided under the Labour Law are consistent with the United Nations Convention on All Forms of Discrimination against Women and

the ILO's Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183).

Other initiatives targeting specific vulnerable categories of beneficiaries have been taken by the Government of Rwanda to support genocide survivors and their families. The Vision 2020 *Umuranga* project provides support to most vulnerable families in their localities through provisional social amenities and the *Ubudehe* project provides cash transfers to the most vulnerable groups, plus one cow per family for the poorer families.

Rwanda has adopted a law regulating labour which has been instrumental in establishing institutional and social frameworks for inclusive and comprehensive social dialogue. Thanks to this legal instrument, current reforms in the Ministry of Labour have put in place an institutional framework to deal specifically with issues of labour administration and inspection.

To enable the effective and broad reach of labour inspection services in rural areas, each local administrative unit has a labour inspector who is responsible for monitoring and ensuring compliance with labour laws, collective agreements and social security laws. An additional budget has been allocated to support continuous capacity-building initiatives and a transport facilitation scheme for labour inspectors.

Let me take this opportunity to inform the audience that Rwanda has so far ratified 28 international labour Conventions, including eight Conventions recognized as fundamental by the Governing Body; other Conventions are in the process of ratification. It is important to note that Rwanda complies with the ILO's annual reporting system.

In 2008 Rwanda established a Workforce Development Authority to promote skills development and to upgrade the skills and competence of the national workforce so as to enhance competitiveness and employability skills. The Government of Rwanda, under the visionary leadership of His Excellency President Paul Kagame, has undertaken to play a leading role in youth employment promotion in Africa, within the framework of the Youth Employment Network. The Government has undertaken programmes to promote youth entrepreneurship through training in business development services and to promote small and medium-sized enterprises and cooperative associations. These initiatives facilitate access to funding through existing financial institutions operating under the Government-financed Business Development Guarantee Fund.

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*Original Vietnamese: Mr MAI DUC (Worker, Viet Nam)*

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This year, the ILO celebrates the 100th Session of the International Labour Conference, an important landmark in its 92-year history. This session is taking place at a time when the impact of the recent global financial crisis and economic downturn continues to affect the current global economic recovery. We share the observations made by the ILO Director-General in his Report, *A new era of social justice*, that "rising social and economic imbalances and inequalities of our societies [...] point to a world that risks becoming unsustainable in many ways – economically, environmentally, socially and politically". We fully agree with the vision of sustainable development for social justice proposed by the Director-General, namely: "The world needs a new era of social justice inspired by a vision of sustainable



development; an era where people's needs, care for our planet Earth and fairness guide policy-making; an era where the benefits of globalization are shared equitably; an era that can spark hope in our youth, creativity in our societies and the credibility of our public and private policies and institutions; an era where the dignity of work is promoted and respected; an era where voice, participation and democracy flourish." We appreciate that the Convention on domestic workers has been democratically debated and expect its adoption by our Conference.

As a workers' organization, the Viet Nam General Confederation of Labour (VGCL), which has a membership of more than 7 million in over 110,000 workplace unions in all national economies, always strives for social justice, as set forth by the ILO. It attaches a social dimension to economic development for sustainable development and the assurance of social protection. In its role as a social partner, the VGCL actively works with the Government and employers' organizations to promote tripartism and fair, stabilized and progressive industrial relations in enterprises. In this spirit, Vietnamese trade unions, in cooperation with the Government and employers' organizations, are participating in the drafting of the revised Labour Code and Trade Union Law. These two key labour laws will be reviewed and adopted by the National Assembly in the near future, with a view to completing the legal framework on labour and ensuring the rights and interests of workers and trade union organizations.

To constantly improve the role of representation and the protection of the workers' rights and interests, the trade unions of Viet Nam pay much attention to the development of membership and the establishment of trade union, negotiation and collective bargaining agreements, with a view to recruiting 1.5 million new members; to raising the unionized rate to 70 per cent of enterprises that are eligible for trade union establishment in accordance with the Vietnamese Trade Union Constitution; recruiting at least 60 per cent of the workers in those enterprises into the union; and seeing 70 per cent of unionized enterprises undertaking negotiation and concluding collective bargaining agreements by the end of 2013.

To achieve those concrete targets, the capacity-building of trade unions is a must. Over the past few years, the ILO, in particular the Bureau for Workers Activities (ACTRAV), has provided Vietnamese trade unions with technical and financial assistance in the fields of training for trade union officers and improving skills for collective bargaining. In early May 2011, ACTRAV, in cooperation with the VGCL, organized a symposium entitled "Strengthening the Role and Representation of Workers and Collective Bargaining" in Hanoi. It was attended by union officers and representatives of the Government and employers' organizations. I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to the ILO for the technical assistance extended to the trade unions of Viet Nam so far and I hope to receive further support from you in the coming period.

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*Original Arabic: Mr SAYED SALMAN (Worker, Bahrain)*

It is my pleasure to greet you on behalf of the workers of Bahrain and to wish our Conference every success in the achievement of its objectives, as well as the protection of trade union rights as an integral part of the human rights system, and obser-

vance of international labour standards as the basis for social justice and decent work.

Our Federation was established in 2004 after a long struggle by the Bahraini workers' movement, as a result of the reform process promised by His Majesty the King, at the beginning of this century through the National Labour Charter. Our Federation supported the political and legislative reforms, calling for their extension and acceleration in accordance with fundamental human rights and international labour standards, trade union rights and public freedoms, freedom of expression, opinion and assembly, which are pivotal to any democratic process anywhere in the world. We have also repeatedly reiterated our support for this process in the interest of the nation and its progress towards democracy and genuine participation in decision-making by all sectors of the people, especially working women and men.

When the breezes of the Arab Spring reached Bahrain from Tunisia, Egypt and other Arab countries whose peoples had endured long periods of suffering, our Federation was the first to raise the slogan "Dialogue is the Solution", and dialogue is still the way out of this crisis. What is more, it is the only way to meet the challenges that may stand in the way of our progress and political, economic and social plans. Accordingly, our Federation also supported the national dialogue initiative of His Highness the Crown Prince and endorsed it wholeheartedly through statements and declarations focusing on economic and social rights in addressing unemployment, especially among young people, and ensuring the social dimension in economic policy, as well as a concept of social protection and a fair wage which makes no distinction between nationals and migrant workers. It also called for the creation of a tripartite social dialogue council.

I am addressing you today at a time when thousands of working men and women, of all ages and levels, in both public and private sectors, are being dismissed from their jobs or brought before the courts on spurious grounds, merely on account of their positions or views as trade unionists. Dozens of trade union leaders have been affected by dismissals in enterprises and in the leadership of the General Federation of Trade Unions, in violation of international standards and Conventions, in particular Conventions Nos 87, 98 and 111.

In this difficult context of dismissals and discrimination, we must shoulder our responsibilities, faced with these numerous violations. We believe that our political leaders, in their wisdom, want stability for our society, which cannot be achieved while hundreds or even thousands of workers are deprived of their livelihoods.

Our Federation remains convinced of the need for dialogue as advocated by His Majesty the King, so that Bahrain can achieve social, economic and political progress, a democratic Bahrain in which the dignity of citizens and workers are respected, and where people enjoy public freedoms and trade union freedoms.

From this august rostrum, we can only condemn and reject the call of major corporations for voluntary resignation of the leaders of the General Federation of Bahrain Trade Unions on pain of criminal and civil prosecution. This constitutes blatant interference in internal trade union affairs and a grave violation of trade union rights and freedoms.



Criminalizing the right to strike is a grave and blatant violation of the most elementary trade union rights, international standards and human rights. We therefore look to the political leadership to defend their reform project against those who would wish to see it wither on the vine.

From this rostrum, I appeal to you to stand beside our people in our struggle and to call for an immediate stop to all the arbitrary collective punishments against us, to guarantee the personal safety of trade unionists, to end the dismissal of workers and trade unionists, to stop the persecution and threats of judicial proceedings, against them, and to reinstate all those who have been dismissed to stop the violations of our trade union rights and freedoms, to stop the smear campaigns against our Federation, to lift the restrictions on freedom of association and trade union autonomy and democracy, and to engage in dialogue with the participation of everyone, based on respect for human rights, dignity and the right to democratic change.

We would like to thank the ILO and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) for their pioneering role in supporting our cause, and consider it necessary for them to continue their efforts in this regard.

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*Original Spanish: Mr ANRÓ (Representative, Confederation of Workers of the Universities of the Americas)*

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It is a great honour for me to speak to you on behalf of the Confederation of Workers of the Universities of the Americas (CONTUA). This is an organization which represents 20 trade unions from 17 Latin American countries, a collective of more than 400,000 technical and administrative staff, civil servants, professionals, hospital and non-teaching staff at the public universities of our continent.

As university workers, our labour and human rights have been violated on countless occasions over the last year. We have been the victims of obstacles designed to impede our trade union work. We have suffered physical and psychological violence. We have been subjected to physical and moral violence, trade union leaders have been dismissed, the legal personalities of our organizations have gone unrecognized and attempts have been made at privatization and to introduce precarious employment.

It has not been an easy year for our university workers and CONTUA, but our member organizations have always raised the flag of social dialogue and decent work when designing strategies to overcome conflicts. However, these conflicts have often deteriorated into street battles, owing to the fact that the authorities do not understand the importance of dialogue and undermine the interests of workers.

In terms of unresolved issues, we wish to reiterate at this Conference, as we did last year, that the Panamanian Government still refuses to recognize the right to organize of public sector workers, in violation of the right of the university workers of Panama to exercise fully the freedom of association.

We also want to reiterate that it is vital that we carry on supporting Colombian trade unionists at an international level. Their right to freedom of association is being systematically violated. They also face attempts on their lives, simply because they are trying to defend the workers' interests.

Our solidarity goes out in particular to the brothers and sisters in the university sector who belong to

the Trade Union of University Workers of Colombia. They risk their lives every day, carrying out their work with great bravery, class consciousness and honour.

Moreover, we are worried about the attempts at privatization which are being carried out in Brazil in the university hospitals.

Just a few days ago, the Trade Union Federation of Brazilian University Workers prevented the Government from establishing a partly privatized body, the goal of which was to manage the public hospitals.

We reject these policies, we defend public, free, inclusive universities, financed by the State. We also congratulate the Federation of Trade Unions of Education Sector Workers of Brazilian Universities (FASUBRA) on their success and we want to lend our support to those workers who, at this precise moment, are on strike, demanding that resources be made available so that they can carry out their administrative work. The fight of FASUBRA is the fight of all university workers in the Americas.

We also want to denounce the attempts by the Government of the Dominican Republic to destroy the health and security system of the workers at the universities of Santo Domingo. We support the struggle of the Dominican comrades and we also wish to voice our complaint before this important international forum.

The situation in Chilean universities is also very complicated. Our member, the National Assembly of State University Workers (ANTUE), tells us that, despite the fact that the Chilean Government ratified Conventions No. 151 on employment in the public administration and No. 154 concerning collective bargaining for workers in the public sector over a decade ago, it has not incorporated these rights into national legislation. Consequently, Chilean workers are prevented from exercising these rights fully and freely.

I should like to turn now to the situation in Ecuador, and more specifically to events at the Central University of Ecuador. The President of the National Federation of Trade Unions of Workers of Universities and Polytechnics of Ecuador, comrade Marcelo Neto Vizcaíno, was dismissed, in a clear example of anti-trade union practice, based on specious arguments about failure to fulfil his employment contract. This is a clear violation of human rights, and we will not stand for it.

CONTUA fully supports our comrades in Ecuador and we will take our complaint to the international courts and forums.

We want to come back to this forum in 2012 without having to reiterate our claims concerning non-compliance with and violation of labour rights. This is a very important world forum, because, as the 1918 Manifesto of University Reform, of Cordoba, Argentina, (a document which sparked off a true revolution of conscience in all Latin American universities), states *The pains that remain are the freedoms we lack.*

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*Original Arabic: Mr SAHRAOUI (Representative, Union of Workers of the Arab Maghreb)*

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First of all, I would like to congratulate the President on his election to guide this session of the International Labour Conference in its work and to thank him for the direction its work has taken. We hope that this session will lead to decisions and stances that respond to the demands of the social

partners and the peoples of the world, given that the economic crisis has now lasted years, leaving behind it millions of victims, in countries of both North and South, who day by day join the ranks of the poor throughout the world.

The economic crisis has brought us face to face with a dilemma: either we consider it as a passing, cyclical crisis that will be overcome by a few adjustments that do not affect the choices we make or the policies we adopt, or we recognize the structural nature of this crisis and examine its causes, which will bring us to consider the choices made and the development policies pursued at national and international level.

It is time to arm ourselves with enough courage to reconsider these policies and to listen more attentively to the ILO and to workers' unions throughout the world, who, for more than two decades, have never ceased to stress the absurdity of dissociating economics from social and political issues. It is time to recognize that freedom, and in particular freedom of association, is the path to social justice, and that genuine and sustainable development can only be achieved in a state equipped with institutions and laws, by fighting corruption, creating equity and distributing the fruits of knowledge fairly, as well as through fairer international relations free of all forms of dominance or inequality of treatment.

The Arab world has suffered and suffers still under dictatorial and tyrannical regimes, given to corruption, economic exclusion and failure to recognize the rights of women and minorities. This part of the world also suffers under an unjust global economic and political system based on exclusion and the right of the mightiest.

Our peoples also suffer the tyranny of their current leaders and the international policies imposed upon them by huge monopolies and international financial institutions, and by a trade system that serves the interests of the great powers.

Together, these sufferings have impelled our peoples, in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, the Syrian Arab Republic and Bahrain, to peaceful revolt, to go out into the streets, to organize strikes and demonstrations in the search for freedom and democracy, decent work and social justice, and to demand a review of our relations with other countries, so as to build a fairer and more equitable world.

The Tunisian and Egyptian people have paid a heavy price to topple dictatorial, corrupt and tyrannical regimes. The Tunisian General Labour Union and independent trade unions in Egypt have set a magnificent example of the lead role that the trade union movement must play in order to respond to the calls of the people and the workers. We hope that all Arab peoples and workers will achieve their goals of freedom, dignity and social justice in all Arab countries.

The Union of Workers of the Arab Maghreb calls on the ILO and all those within the trade union movement to show greater solidarity with our people and workers in the Arab world in their struggle to build democratic, modern societies that offer decent work to young people and that respect the values of modernity, equality and social justice.

The Union of Workers of the Arab Maghreb has taken note of the Report of the Director-General concerning the situation of Arab workers in Palestine and the occupied territories. This Report con-

tains much information on the suffering of Arab workers in territories living under occupation.

We think that, in order to put an end to this suffering, it is first necessary to bring an end to the occupation of the Palestinian territories, Syrian Golan and the Shebaa Farms in Lebanon, and to allow the Palestinian people to establish their own independent State with Al-Quds as its capital.

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*Original French: Mr CELI VEGAS (Representative, Exchange and Cooperation Centre for Latin America)*

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On behalf of the Exchange and Cooperation Centre for Latin America – an international organization, based in Geneva, with consultative status on the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) – I would like to greet all the participants at this great assembly.

The Director-General's Report indicates that equality at work is one of the ILO's major objectives. Indeed, inequality at work exists everywhere, throughout our global society. However, there is no doubt that the three main groups most affected by this problem are women, indigenous peoples and peoples of African descent.

Around 370 million people throughout the world belong to an indigenous community, mainly in Asia, Africa and America. This group represents around 5,000 different languages and cultures. Indigenous peoples are extremely diverse, and have a very rich ethnic heritage. They have seen their rights restricted as a result of cultural, economic, social and political domination by colonizing peoples. However, significant progress has been made with regard to action taken by the international community to protect these people. Thus, the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2007, recognizes the right of indigenous peoples to self-determination.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, indigenous peoples represent 5 per cent of the world's population, but also 15 per cent of the poorest people in the world. This poverty then creates even greater inequality between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples in the world of work, particularly with regard to remuneration.

In certain countries in Latin America, measures have been put into place to combat these inequalities. For example, a programme to promote better living conditions for some communities has been implemented in Chile. In addition, the Nicaraguan Government recently ratified the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169), which protects the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples and guarantees respect for their integrity.

Such measures are needed to combat the discrimination to which indigenous peoples fall victim. It is essential, therefore, to support these measures, ensure their successful implementation and encourage similar ones.

The role of NGOs is fundamental in developing and implementing legal instruments to protect indigenous communities. The work of these NGOs will unquestionably allow progress to be made in attenuating labour inequalities, in particular those that exist in the formal and informal economies.

Action by NGOs within the United Nations has allowed indigenous societies to move forward. For example, indigenous peoples were actively involved in the United Nations Conference on Environment

and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. They represent a model for a green economy, which is why they had an essential role to play in Rio.

Issues relating to indigenous peoples that are linked to economic and social development, culture, environment, education, health and human rights must continue to be tackled with the active participation of NGOs.

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*Original Spanish: Mr HEMSANI (Representative, Latin American Union of Auditing Bodies - Unión Latinoamericana de Trabajadores de Organismos de Control)*

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Firstly, I would like to welcome the Director-General's Report, which calls on us to begin a new era of social justice, highlighting, in a particularly lucid fashion, the key factors that have plunged our world into the crisis we currently face.

I am speaking to you on behalf of the Latin American Union of Auditing Bodies. (ULATOC). We believe that democratic, efficient and responsible governance is the key to ensuring that countries develop and consolidate sustainable growth over time, along with an equitable and fair distribution of wealth. Our peoples need active and efficient states, with appropriate tools to eradicate corruption, a problem which creates delays, inequality and poverty.

Our societies want action and results from their governments. Governments, in turn, require assistance in efficiently administering the meagre resources available to them. We need greater transparency and information about the work of governments if citizens are to achieve greater social control. We are fighting to defend labour and trade union rights and also for greater recognition of the fact that public auditing is a fundamental part of a social state based on the rule of law. The mission of the workers of auditing bodies is to serve the public interest. Public auditing is the appropriate mechanism for highlighting, in a timely manner, any discrepancies and for recommending corrective action in the public administration, as well as promoting transparency in the management of public policies. Public auditing is the bridge between the citizens and public life, enabling them to become involved in the running of the country through participatory social auditing.

The task of auditors should not be an autopsy. We need to have socially useful, rather than simply formal and bureaucratic, auditing. We believe that more efficient public auditing leads to better quality institutions in states governed by the rule of law. Therefore, public auditing promotes democracy. The absence of public auditing facilitates corruption and the diversion of funds, as well as endangering the lives, health, education and wellbeing of citizens. In other words, lack of auditing is deadly.

The issue of public auditors is also relevant for the other workers for whom the International Labour Organization seeks to achieve decent work.

Our work is very specific in its nature and we require a range of approaches and solutions. The independence of public auditing bodies must be defended, along with their workers. We must be allowed to work, free from internal and external pressure and conditions. Auditing activities must be allowed to be carried out without the messenger being shot.

We are firmly convinced that regional and international cooperation and social dialogue are indispensable in resolving the common problems that affect all workers and, in particular, public auditors.

ULATOC campaigns in this regard, participating in the activities of Public Services International (PSI), where we have managed to create a specific auditing sector. The same has been achieved at the regional level with the Coordinating Office of Trade Union Centrals of the Southern Cone, MERCOSUR (the Southern Common Market), the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly (EUROLAT) and in the ILO and other bodies which work to defend the rights of auditing workers and to promote recognition of the valuable task of auditing.

ULATOC therefore calls on the Conference to consider establishing a specific body within the ILO that would be responsible for examining our specific issues, with the conclusions of that body serving as the basis for a standard on the protection of the workers in our sector and guaranteeing the institutional quality of public auditing.

*(The Conference adjourned at 8.05 p.m.)*

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