



Plenary sitting

Reports of the Recurrent Discussion Committee: Social dialogue and tripartism

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Thursday, 7 June 2018, 4.45 p.m.
*President: Mr Elmiger, Government
Vice-President of the Conference*

Summary of proceedings

Submission, discussion and approval of the report of the Recurrent Discussion Committee: Social dialogue and tripartism

The President *(Original French)*

I declare open the 12th plenary sitting of the 107th Session of the International Labour Conference.

The first item on our agenda is the submission, discussion and approval of the report of the Recurrent Discussion Committee on social dialogue and tripartism, contained in *Provisional Record* No. 6B, and which presents a summary of the Committee's work.

I would like to welcome the Officers of the Committee, who are here on the podium: Mr Bevers, Chairperson; Ms Rudelli, Employer Vice-Chairperson; Mr Dimitrov, Worker Vice-Chairperson; and Ms Nxumalo-Magagula, Reporter.

I now give the floor to the Reporter, the Honourable Ms Nxumalo-Magagula, Minister of Labour and Social Security of Eswatini (formerly known as Swaziland), who will present the Committee's report.

Ms Nxumalo-Magagula Reporter of the Recurrent Discussion Committee: Social dialogue and tripartism

It is an honour and a privilege for me to have been appointed Reporter of the Recurrent Discussion Committee on social dialogue and tripartism.

The Committee discussed the progress achieved since the first recurrent discussion and conclusions reached in 2013, focusing on good practices and implementation gaps that still exist. The discussions were timely as next year the Organization will be celebrating its centenary. The Committee started its work on 28 May and concluded on 5 June 2018. Throughout the seven sittings, attendance and active engagement in the Committee did not falter, with around 200 delegates participating in each sitting.

The Committee began its deliberations by sharing the experience of, and lessons learned by, constituents and by identifying priorities for its discussion based on the Office's concise yet comprehensive report. The three points selected for discussion comprised what works, how to make social dialogue inclusive and how to adjust ILO action accordingly. The Committee discussed the trends and challenges associated with social dialogue actors and institutions in a changing world; the regulatory frameworks that shape social dialogue; and good practices and areas where progress needs to be made in terms of tripartite and bipartite social dialogue and cross-border social dialogue.

The Committee also reviewed and assessed the support provided by the Office to member States in the process of implementing the conclusions of the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference in 2013 and the Office's plan of action for 2013–17.

The Committee assessed the Office's response to constituents' diverse realities and needs regarding support for actors, institutions and legal frameworks; the social dialogue dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals and action taken to promote policy coherence more generally; and the links between social dialogue and tripartism and the three other ILO strategic objectives.

These discussions were held in the context of significant changes in the world of work that were triggered by the mega-drivers of change – technology, demography, climate change and globalization – and also in the context of the global consensus on the need for more participatory governance and social dialogue to effectively implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the United Nations reform, two important platforms that promote policy coherence at all levels.

Based on a rich and varied experience with respect to measures taken by constituents in implementing the conclusions of the 2013 session of the Conference and the actions of the Office taken in the last five years, I am delighted to report that following productive discussions in our drafting group, a common vision for the years to come was reached, based on a broad tripartite consensus on the principles needed to lead the way forward.

A framework for action was defined that sets out measures to be taken by both the ILO and its Members to further advance the strategic objective of social dialogue and tripartism and ultimately to move forward the Decent Work Agenda.

It is therefore with great humility that I present for adoption the report of the Recurrent Discussion Committee on social dialogue and tripartism, which includes a draft resolution and conclusions and provides compelling strategic guidance for the Organization, based on tripartite consensus, until the next recurrent discussion on social dialogue and tripartism.

Allow me to share with you some highlights of our conclusions. In developing a common vision, the Committee agreed that the guiding principles adopted by the Conference in 2013 to promote and implement the strategic objective of social dialogue remain relevant. The Committee therefore unambiguously reaffirmed these principles and built new consensus points around them.

Importantly, the Committee agreed that in the context of deep, rapid changes affecting the world of work, the tripartite constituents should renew and reaffirm their commitment to promote and apply the principles of social dialogue and tripartism in order to attain decent work and social justice. The Committee also agreed that the implementation of the ILO's actions should be guided by the diverse needs and realities of its national constituents. Collective bargaining is at the heart of social dialogue, yet there is no one-size-fits-all model of social dialogue.

The Committee also agreed that inclusive social dialogue actors and institutions are fundamental to ensuring effective laws, institutions and policies. Thus, giving a voice to those who are excluded from the scope of laws and policies or are under-represented in social dialogue, including workers in new and emerging forms of employment, is fundamental.

In brief, the Committee agreed, among other things, on the need for governments, with the support of the Organization, to take measures to ensure that social dialogue and tripartism are granted appropriate resources and attention and effectiveness in policy-making; to promote, respect and implement freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining; to foster enabling legal and institutional environments; to

strengthen relevant mechanisms and institutions in the light of technological change, the green economy, demographic shifts and globalization; to strengthen national labour administration systems and dispute prevention and resolution mechanisms; to extend freedom of association and collective bargaining to workers in new and emerging forms of employment and extend their representation; to expand cooperation in order to exchange experience and innovative practices in the areas of social dialogue and tripartism; and to promote cross-border social dialogue.

An important objective of the recurrent discussions is guidance for Office action. The conclusions request the Organization to mobilize and coordinate all its modalities of action in order to support constituents in fulfilling their obligations in relation to social dialogue and tripartism in the context of their specific circumstances.

Building on results achieved since 2013, the Committee's conclusions provide clear and specific guidance on how the ILO should continue, expand and strengthen its work in the areas of capacity building and strengthening development cooperation, and enhancing research and training, standards-related activities and policy coherence.

In conclusion, I would like to underscore that the work of both the Committee and the drafting group provided a unique opportunity to demonstrate the strong support of constituents for tripartite social dialogue.

The spirit of consensus-driven deliberations, in particular during the deliberations of the drafting group, was remarkable despite the array of opinions and visions expressed. The Committee has therefore successfully arrived at rich and valuable conclusions that will undoubtedly make a positive contribution to the promotion of workplace democracy.

I would like to express a heartfelt gratitude to our Chairperson, Mr Bevers (Belgium), for his skilful and passionate direction of the work of the Committee. He ensured that the Committee's discussions were balanced and always kept us on course and focused, so much so that the Committee completed its work one day ahead of schedule.

I wish to thank as well the Employer and Worker Vice-Chairpersons, Ms Rudelli (France) and Mr Dimitrov (Bulgaria), respectively, whose ambition, passion and spirit of compromise helped us reach this shared outcome and vision.

I am grateful to all the members of the drafting group – governments, employers and workers – who worked tirelessly to build inclusive and balanced conclusions.

I would also like to express, on behalf of the Committee, my deepest appreciation for the efficient support of the secretariat under the guidance of the representative of the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr Vines and the deputy representative, Mr Fannizadeh; for the team of senior advisers and experts, who prepared an excellent background report that led to the comprehensive discussions of the Committee and to its report; for the efficient and effective work done by the Committee's coordination team; and for the interpreters.

The dedication and support of each and every member of the secretariat over the past two weeks was exemplary. The secretariat did its work in a very professional and calm manner. It remained at the disposal of the delegates, by day, by night and over the weekend, and it remained unbiased and was not influenced by pressures one way or the other. Its commitment and hard work helped the Committee to produce a report and conclusions that do justice to the objective and purpose of the recurrent discussion.

I recommend this report for approval and the resolution and conclusions it contains for adoption by the Conference, in the firm belief that they provide valuable guidance for the

accomplishment of the strategic objective of social dialogue and tripartism which lies at the heart of the Organization's work.

Ms Rudelli
Employer Vice-Chairperson of the
Recurrent Discussion Committee:
Social dialogue and tripartism

On behalf of the Employers' group, I will start by commending the report of the Recurrent Discussion Committee on social dialogue and tripartism and recommending its approval in this plenary.

The work of this Committee took place in a constructive and open atmosphere and the Employers' group expresses its satisfaction with the outcome. Indeed, this Committee has been able to produce meaningful, short and actionable conclusions.

ILO constituents convene here for this recurrent discussion with the specific objective, and I quote from the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, to:

(i) understand better the diverse realities and needs of its Members with respect to each of the strategic objectives, respond more effectively to them, using all the means of action at its disposal, including standards-related action, technical cooperation, and the technical and research capacity of the Office, and adjust its priorities and programmes of action accordingly; and (ii) assess the results of the ILO's activities with a view to informing programme, budget and other governance decisions".

We believe that our common objective was achieved. We have heard the diverse realities and means of the constituents with regard to social dialogue and tripartism and we have raised many challenges and opportunities for this important process. At the same time, we have carefully reflected upon future ILO actions to better suit constituents' needs and circumstances and deliver concrete impact for constituents on the ground.

Everyone is aware that social dialogue and tripartism are part of the DNA of this house and they are fundamental to fulfilling the ILO's mandate. They are also at the core of a number of international labour standards and are an essential element of Office research, capacity-building and knowledge-sharing programmes. This discussion has demonstrated the diversity of social dialogue forms and processes. There is no one-size-fits-all model of social dialogue, no hierarchy. All forms of social dialogue are commendable and serve different needs. It may well take place at the company level in order to better respond to the specific needs of the company and its work; at the sectoral level, where, for instance, specific working conditions can be negotiated by means of collective agreements; or at the national level, in the form of tripartite agreements on social and employment policy matters. This discussion has led to the recognition of the importance of strong, autonomous and representative social partner organizations.

How to achieve this is one of the biggest challenges we face collectively. Each one of us needs to reflect individually on what we offer our respective constituents and adapt accordingly in order to better meet their needs and priorities. Thanks to the frank and open exchange in this Committee, it was made clear that social dialogue is not just for the Workers, but that another group is indispensable for this dialogue to take place – the Employers.

Social dialogue processes continue to have tremendous value in many realities, and the International Labour Office should focus its efforts on rigorously developing the business case using quantitative data and other relevant arguments. This is absolutely key, given the rapid changes taking place in the world of work.

Finally, we all ensured that the Committee did not ignore the huge challenge of informality. The fact that more than 60 per cent of the world's working population are in the informal economy means that more than 60 per cent of workers are, de facto, unable to participate in social dialogue. In the Committee's view, this issue is a matter of great urgency, and the Office should play a more prominent role in supporting the constituents in increasing their efforts to formalize those workers.

This recurrent discussion has demonstrated that social dialogue is alive and well. It brings together different perspectives and views and, once supported within a good framework, can deliver satisfactory outcomes as well as help to address bigger challenges such as social progress, conflict prevention, democratic governance and growth.

The Employers' group attaches great importance to the conclusions adopted by this session of the Conference, especially given the many changes taking place in the world of work today.

The proposed framework for action contained in the conclusions will help guide ILO member States and the Office, with the support of its constituents, in strengthening social dialogue and tripartism at all relevant levels.

ILO Members should, among others things: promote effective social dialogue, as well as strengthen mechanisms and institutions for social dialogue; promote voluntary collective bargaining at all appropriate levels; encourage effective workplace cooperation; and ensure that agreed outcomes of social dialogue are respected and implemented by governments and the social partners.

The Office, for its part, has been requested to make a far greater effort in responding to the needs and diverse realities of the Members, taking a bottom-up approach to strengthen social dialogue and tripartism on the ground and to overcome problems when they arise. As the first step in this direction, the International Labour Office will provide support in building the capacity of the constituents and social dialogue institutions to engage in effective and meaningful social dialogue and development, or to enhance research and training on the role and impact of social dialogue on different issues, ranging from working conditions to economic performance and changes in the world of work.

The Office should also increase its efforts to promote the ratification and effective implementation of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), and the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144).

Finally, the Office has been requested to focus on achieving better internal policy coherence when it examines and promotes social dialogue, as well as external policy clearance, especially within the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the ongoing United Nations reform process.

The Employers look forward to playing their part in the implementation of the actions that form part of these conclusions and to appreciating the concrete impact of the Office actions on this matter.

In conclusion, the Employers' group would like to express its sincere thanks to everyone who participated in this recurrent discussion for reaching a satisfying decision on such an important topic.

In particular, I would like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the Chairperson of the Committee, Mr Bevers, for the smooth running of the Committee's

meetings, and his calm and considered approach, especially during the difficult negotiations. Please also allow me to thank Mr Dimitrov and his team for their constructive collaboration. We locked horns on a few points but we end this Committee's work with a text that includes priorities for both sides. Let me also extend my thanks to the Office for its work, support and professionalism throughout the process, often late at night and early in the morning. I would especially like to thank my colleagues in the Employers' group for their personal and intellectual support, as well as for their dedication and commitment during all our sittings. I would like to express my gratitude to the members of the drafting group and to their team, which provided additional support. Last, and certainly by no means least, very special thanks go to my team from the International Organisation of Employers and the Bureau for Employers' Activities for their invaluable support and preparation.

Mr Dimitrov

Worker Vice-Chairperson of the
Recurrent Discussion Committee:
Social dialogue and tripartism

Our recurrent discussion on social dialogue and tripartism under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, 2008 took place in a global context of historically high inequality, in which wages continue to fall behind productivity growth and job insecurity continues to rise. Around 40 per cent of workers in the formal economy have vulnerable forms of employment, 25 million work in conditions of forced labour and 152 million are child labourers. On average, women are paid 23 per cent less than men and are vastly under-represented (20 per cent) in social dialogue structures. Half of the world's workers still live in countries that have not ratified one or both critical Conventions protecting the enabling rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining. On the eve of the centenary of an Organization established to promote social justice and to combat inequality, these figures shame us all.

Indeed, the evaluation of the Social Justice Declaration in 2016 showed that major challenges remain to ensure that globalization benefits all in the face of major changes in technology, climate and demographics. Ten years after its adoption, we must all recognize that we have failed to deliver. We cannot ignore the fact that our collective failure to reduce inequality demonstrates a clear lack of political will to push the Organization to fulfil its constitutional mandate.

It is therefore important that our conclusions renew our political commitment to social dialogue and tripartism, based on respect for freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, as the ILO's governance paradigm to promote social justice. We reiterate that the ILO's unique tripartite structure, standards and supervisory mechanism should prevail, not only at this 107th Session of the Conference and in the ILO, but also next year during the centenary and in the context of United Nations reform.

We are particularly pleased to see concrete actions. We welcome the call for an intensified campaign for universal ratification of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), and the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144); for work by the Office with constituents to overcome obstacles to ratification and effective implementation in all Decent Work Country Programmes; for the allocation of the necessary resources at all levels; and for a high-level event to be held during the centenary to highlight the centrality of freedom of association, collective bargaining, standards and supervision in the ILO's work. We also welcome the call for increased efforts to promote the implementation of other relevant instruments, in line with the conclusions of 2013, understood to include Convention No. 144, the Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978 (No. 151) the Collective Bargaining Convention, 1981 (No. 154), the Collective Agreements Recommendation, 1951 (No. 91),

the Consultation (Industrial and National Levels) Recommendation, 1960 (No. 113), and, notably, the Employment Relationship Recommendation, 2006 (No. 198).

We take the opportunity to congratulate Cameroon, Georgia, Iraq and Niger for important ratifications concluded during 2018.

We look forward to improved data on industrial relations. We especially welcome the annual flagship reports on social dialogue, which focus on the important role that collective bargaining can play in reducing inequality. Social dialogue and collective bargaining are a constitutional obligation of this house, as noted by the Employer Vice-Chairperson just one hour ago on this podium, and the wealth of good practice experience demonstrated in the flagship reports shows that economies and societies benefit from well-developed systems of social dialogue with collective bargaining at their core. We also welcome an ambitious specific action plan to implement target 8.8 of the Sustainable Development Goals on labour rights.

Social dialogue with free, independent and representative employers' and workers' organizations is key to addressing the challenges and opportunities of the future of work. We need to ensure a just transition to a future of work in which workers and employers have a say in the development and implementation of the policies that affect them.

As to fair globalization, we are pleased to note the acknowledgement of the importance of cross-border social dialogue to address existing decent work deficits in the global economy, including for vulnerable groups in global supply chains, and the call for the ILO to play a bigger role in this regard.

We hope that the proposed policy coherence initiatives in pilot countries involving social partners and all relevant ministries will draw lessons from previous responses to the financial crisis and strengthen policy coherence in order to prevent austerity measures and blind deregulation.

We reiterate that all workers have the right to freedom of association and to collective bargaining, regardless of their employment relationships. In addition to necessary work on workers in non-standard forms of employment, as reflected in the conclusions of the recurrent discussion on labour protection in 2015, we are looking forward to research on access to freedom of association and collective bargaining for new and emerging forms of employment, such as gig and platform workers, and to a potential tripartite meeting on the issue to identify possible areas for further action.

To tackle the demographical challenges, we welcome the call for social dialogue and tripartism on labour migration policy, as well as closer engagement with the process of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration. We particularly welcome the focus on gender equality and the strengthening of women's participation in social dialogue.

We regret, however, the lack of a shared ambition to tackle the issues of climate change, data protection and privacy, as reflected in our conclusions.

During the drafting process, I referred to my personal background as a seafarer, making an analogy to the ILO as a tripartite ship on a voyage towards social justice. A ship brings together the interests of seafarers, a shipowner and a maritime authority. All need each other to thrive. At the ILO, the interests of workers, employers and governments from every corner in the world come together. We all need each other to thrive. The previous ten days have not been easy. We workers have known moments of frustration and are prepared to be more ambitious in the future; based on the consensus proposed, however, we believe we can start turning the tide on rising inequality towards more social justice with renewed energy and commitment, allowing us to jointly make the future work for all.

I would like to thank my colleagues in the Workers' group, the drafting group and the Office for their invaluable input and the trust they have placed in me. In spite of the unbalanced first draft produced, leading to long and difficult negotiations and late-night sittings, I am grateful to the Office for its hard work.

Finally, I wish to thank the Chairperson and the Employer Vice-Chairperson and her team for their excellent work and collaboration, my team from the International Trade Union Confederation and from the Bureau for Workers' Activities for their tireless work during the day and late into the evenings, and the Secretary of the Workers' group for this Committee, Mr Beirnaert.

I have the honour to present our conclusions for adoption.

Mr Bevers

Chairperson, Recurrent Discussion Committee:
Social dialogue and tripartism

I have the honour, in my capacity as Chairperson of the Recurrent Discussion Committee on social dialogue and tripartism, to present to you some observations on the proceedings and outcome of the Committee's work.

Let me highlight a few points to complement the excellent account of our work that you just heard from the Committee's Reporter and Vice-Chairpersons. Our session marked the second recurrent discussion on the strategic objective of social dialogue and tripartism.

As the ILO heads towards its centenary next year, the Committee's discussions have reconfirmed that social dialogue and tripartism are at the heart of this Organization and should remain a cornerstone of the Decent Work Agenda. At the same time, our discussions clearly highlighted that social dialogue is inextricably bound up with the changing global environment and the evolving world of work.

In addition to the persisting inequalities and vulnerabilities and the changing nature of work and the employment relationship, new realities have emerged to challenge the ILO's social dialogue model and social partners. Technological and demographic changes, climate change and environmental policies, as well as globalization, are accelerating in pace and depth, generating both benefits that need to be fully exploited and equitably shared and burdens that need to be fairly distributed.

The discussions in the Committee showed that constituents need continuous support to strengthen social dialogue, including top-level national and sectoral social dialogue, collective bargaining, workplace cooperation and cross-border social dialogue, in order to anticipate and manage the impacts of these changes and contribute to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Moreover, partners need a stronger voice in designing and implementing the overall policies to cope with these changes. While adapting economies and preparing societies in the context of the evolving global environment is a joint responsibility of all actors in social dialogue, the Organization and the Office need to appreciate the priorities of each constituent and the different perspectives, national contexts and models for social dialogue, as members have often stated. While we can learn a lot from each other, there is no one-size-fits-all model of social dialogue.

In this light, members have indicated their continuing commitment to working hand in hand with the Office in order to respond to emerging challenges in new areas, such as the digital economy, and to enable employers' and workers' organizations to provide their members with adequate services that take advantage of the new realities shaping labour–

management relations and that strengthen workers' collective voice, including workers engaging in new and emerging forms of employment and those who, more frequently than others, lack protection in law or in practice.

Members have confirmed that collective bargaining remains at the heart of social dialogue and is a key tool for ensuring that the fruits of progress are justly shared, for obtaining decent working conditions, for shaping skills policies and for enhancing enterprise sustainability. Moreover, and this relates to a discussion that has been ongoing in this plenary session, collective bargaining should contribute to greater gender equality and to tackling the gender pay gap.

In addition to promoting the ratification, particularly in view of the centenary, and the effective implementation of Conventions Nos 87, 98 and 144 and other related instruments, members have emphasized the need to continue developing knowledge and rigorous research on the status and impacts of various forms of bipartite and tripartite social dialogue, as it is this Organization's vocation to be the key global knowledge centre on social dialogue and tripartism.

Members have reaffirmed the fundamental importance of freedom of association and recognition of the right to collective bargaining; of strong, independent and representative organizations interacting in conditions of mutual trust and respect; and of empowered national labour administrations. All these are indispensable preconditions for inclusive, productive and sound social dialogue, indeed for credible social dialogue.

Importantly, they have pointed to the need for expanded social dialogue to reach the uncountable workers who are currently excluded or under-represented, and for institutional innovations to fill this gap. The discussion held in our Committee must not be the end-point. We have identified, debated and tackled the challenges confronting social dialogue, but it is fair to say that none of us has yet fully come to terms with all of them.

The conclusions that this Conference is asked to adopt should therefore also be seen as an input to further debate, to further social dialogue, in this Organization and beyond, including in the context of the ongoing United Nations reform.

Indeed, we cannot wait until the next recurrent discussion to refine our analysis and to take further steps to prepare social dialogue for the future. In the meantime, however, members have given the ILO a fresh, timely and strong mandate on which the Organization and the Office can base their actions for years to come, as the ILO stands at the threshold of its second century of existence.

I take the liberty to say that the Committee has done an excellent job in fulfilling that task. This was made possible through effective social dialogue and consensus building around the issues, including difficult questions on which opinions and perspectives differed.

I would also like to extend my sincerest appreciation to the members of the drafting group, which started its work with a "zero draft" prepared by the secretariat at my request. All three sides, Governments, Employers and Workers, were represented in the drafting group.

I would like to thank the Vice-Chairpersons, Ms Rudelli for the Employers and Mr Dimitrov for the Workers, and their teams, for their vision, ambition and commitment. I would also like to thank the Government members for their valuable contributions and thoughtful reflections.

I would also like to thank all delegates for their full and positive engagement in our plenary meetings and in the preparatory meetings of all constituents. Allow me to thank in

particular my fellow Government delegates who attended and participated actively in the Committee's deliberations.

Special thanks go to the Office team of senior advisers and experts for their excellent preparation of this recurrent discussion, including their concise yet comprehensive background report, which provided an excellent basis for discussion, and for their competent support during the deliberations.

Last but not least I thank the coordinators, Ms Muller, Ms Recort Ruiz and Ms Wong, who provided continuous and efficient support throughout the entire two weeks, and who worked long hours to secure the final outcome of the Committee.

The work of our Committee has ended but the real task begins now. As we leave this prestigious venue to return to our respective countries, wiser, and with a stronger political mandate in the area of social dialogue, allow me to end by quoting a line from Plato's *Republic*: "Mankind will never see an end of trouble until lovers of wisdom come to hold political power, or the holders of power become lovers of wisdom".

I believe the outcome of this Committee augurs well for the realization of Plato's prerequisites for a less troubled world.

The President
(Original French)

I would like to thank all the Officers of the Committee for the report that has been submitted and for the work they have done.

The discussion of the report of the Recurrent Discussion Committee on social dialogue and tripartism is now open.

Mr Salchev
Government (Bulgaria)

I am speaking on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. The candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the Stabilization and Association Process country and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) country Norway, member of the European Economic Area; and also Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

As we all know, for almost 100 years the ILO and all its activities have been founded on social dialogue. The ILO is for this reason a unique body within the United Nations system. On the basis of this practice of social dialogue, we have agreed to a consensual, action-oriented outcome document. This is an important result which we all have been able to achieve.

We welcome this outcome in many ways. It builds upon the conclusions of the 2013 recurrent discussion on social dialogue, which remain valid. But we also looked at new challenges and opportunities in the changing world of work.

We remain convinced that social dialogue is a crucial factor for a well-functioning social market economy, the promotion of sustainable development, the fight against inequalities and discrimination, and the promotion of social justice.

We are particularly happy with the renewed commitment to the universal ratification and effective implementation of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to

Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98).

The outcome provides for measures for strengthening capacity building, research and partnership to foster an inclusive social dialogue and enhance its positive impact.

It draws particular attention to the role of social dialogue in promoting gender equality and non-discrimination, skills development anticipation and management of change, as well as the transition from the informal to the formal economy and decent work in global supply chains.

We consider it useful that different forms and levels of social dialogue are addressed, including collective bargaining and cross-border social dialogue.

We welcome the orientations on how social dialogue can address changes in the world of work, including as regards the gig economy and other technological changes, demographic shifts, climate change and globalization. They will contribute to the ILO's Future of Work Initiative.

Social dialogue being one of the strategic objectives of the ILO, we support the idea of a flagship report in this area, which will enhance the visibility of the ILO as a centre of expertise and reference on social dialogue.

However, the Governing Body will need to carefully consider the modalities to make such a flagship report feasible, taking into account the financial and organizational implications of this objective, especially in the view of the decided publishing rhythm.

We are confident that the conclusions will contribute to fostering decent work and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

As we all head home, I hope that we may continue to put into practice a meaningful social dialogue in all its forms, which is essential to the well-being of our changing society both nationally and in the ILO itself.

Mr Nadome
Worker (Kenya)

On behalf of the Africa group and as a member of the drafting group, allow me to thank our Committee Chairperson, the Worker Vice-Chairperson, the Employer Vice-Chairperson, the Office, the secretariat and all Committee members for a job well done. In fact, to be precise, this job was well executed in record time.

I would like to highlight an important aspect of the report that touches on research and enhancing training: the Office is to continue research regarding access to freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining by digital platform and gig economy workers.

How important or relevant is it to ask such a question in this house and, all the more so, among developing countries? The digital platform is no longer unique to the North; it is right on our doorstep. It is being fully embraced and is spreading like bushfire in our countries. For that very reason, we applaud the Office's timely intention to delve further or deeper into these new forms of work with a view to addressing their attendant shortcomings. We are optimistic that next year's session will give them due attention.

Mr Janson
Government (Sweden)

Sweden aligns itself with the statement made by Bulgaria on behalf of the EU and its Member States.

Sweden would like to thank all the participants in the Committee, the secretariat and the interpreters for their good and efficient work.

The outcome of this Committee will, we hope, have a concrete and profound impact for persons on the ground. Social dialogue enables us to achieve many of the most fundamental rights and principles at work. However, in too many places around the world, workers are denied basic human rights and some are even persecuted and killed. Children are still forced to work in the most inhumane conditions, and migrants are exploited in horrific ways. Every year, there are more than 2.7 million work-related deaths, 310 million non-lethal accidents at work and 160 million work-related cases of illness.

Conditions also need to be improved for the more than 780 million women and men who are working but not earning enough to make a decent living, and the transition from the informal to the formal economy must be facilitated. We know that growing inequalities can fuel social unrest and impede sustainable economic growth.

The future of work, with its emphasis on globalization and digitalization, evokes both hopes and fears. A recent Eurobarometer EU public opinion survey showed that, while most respondents were positive about the impact of digital technologies on society, the economy and their quality of life, many were also concerned that the use of robots and artificial intelligence would lead to job losses and that these technologies need careful management.

Social dialogue is key to managing change and attaining mutually accepted outcomes. Well-functioning social dialogue that adapts effectively to changes in the world of work, technological developments and fluctuations in demand is an important tool for generating decent work and improved job quality. I would also emphasize that well-developed social dialogue also suits the interests of business, which stands to benefit from increased productivity, more stable and secure supply chains, better conditions for long-term planning and risk management, reduced risk of disruption to business operations and, not least, healthier and more loyal workers.

These are some of the reasons why the Swedish Government, in its national and international policies, seeks to enhance the role of social dialogue. The Global Deal: Together for decent work and inclusive growth is an important part of the Government's belief that social dialogue can benefit from additional focus and that it can foster decent work, quality jobs and increased productivity, and by extension greater equality and inclusive growth.

I want to make a plea. During the work of the Committee, Sweden made factual corrections to some of the statements, the same corrections that were made again and again in other ILO meetings. Despite tough discussions and diverging views, we still try to reach compromises, even though we might not succeed. What is essential for the work of this Organization and for social dialogue in general is that discussions are based on good faith and that we take into account each other's arguments. I therefore urge all participants to conduct their discussions on the basis of facts and mutual respect.

With these words, Sweden supports the conclusions of the Committee.

Ms Pineau
Worker (Canada)
(Original French)

The members of the Workers' group of this Committee who took part in the discussion on social dialogue are pleased to be here at this 107th Session of the Conference. Gender equality is a matter that concerns all aspects of the strategic objective of social dialogue.

Women's participation in social dialogue is crucial at all levels. Nevertheless, the ILO report on social dialogue and tripartism paints a worrying picture of women's place in this dialogue, stressing that data collected at the global scale confirm the poor representation of women in national social dialogue institutions – usually less than 20 per cent, which is an obstacle to promoting gender equality.

In his Report entitled *The Women at Work Initiative: The push for equality*, the Director-General states that “we are still a long way from the goal of equality, and progress towards it is slow, uneven and uncertain”.

Significant progress on gender equality will only be achieved if women are fully involved in tripartism and social dialogue. It is no longer enough to talk about equality, and social dialogue institutions must be feminized so that they reflect women's viewpoint.

The conclusions of this recurrent discussion in 2013 stressed the need to broaden and strengthen women's participation in social dialogue. The conclusions of 2018, while reaffirming that need, will enable us to go further. They call on the Office to “enhance the capacity of constituents and the social dialogue institutions to ... encourage participation of women ... in social partnership organizations and seek to achieve equal representation of men and women in social dialogue institutions at the national and international levels”.

Women should have a say on all aspects of work. Furthermore, women workers should be able to organize to negotiate their working conditions.

Collective bargaining, the core element in social dialogue, has a very important role to play in achieving equality. It reduces wage gaps, ensures working conditions in line with women's aspirations, and gives women decision-making power over a major aspect of their lives, namely work.

The key to the future of work is gender equality, increased participation by women in social dialogue institutions, with parity as the final objective, and the removal of obstacles to unionization and to the right of all workers to negotiate – be they male or female.

Mr Serroyen
Worker (Belgium)

The Committee agreed once again that collective bargaining is at the heart of social dialogue, using even stronger wording than that adopted in 2013. The inequality and declining labour share mentioned in the conclusions need to be remedied by wage increases, which, as even the economists noted last week, means that “workers need more bargaining power”. But we have to realize that this approach has consequences.

First, we need effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, including the right to strike. Without effective collective bargaining, we have only collective begging. The report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations to the Committee on the Application of Standards this year provided another world tour of countries with severe restrictions on those rights.

Second, we need governments who respect the autonomy of the social partners and therefore do not interfere with the agreed outcomes of collective bargaining. Social partners are democratic organizations working with a mandate. How can a mandate for balanced compromise ever be achieved if governments disturb the balance after agreement has been reached?

Third, while there is no single model for social dialogue, it is evident that the centralized model of collective bargaining, or at least centrally coordinated collective bargaining, performs better, as clearly demonstrated by recent research by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. As a Dutch economist once noted, arrangements at the company level too often serve as a shelter from broader social responsibilities. Last but not least, we need to effectively support the right to collective bargaining for all workers, as prescribed under the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), including for workers in the informal economy, domestic workers, workers in all non-standard forms of employment and workers in any new form of employment which emerges from digitalization. In particular, we need to effectively support the right to collective bargaining for the self-employed, as repeatedly stated by the Committee on the Application of Standards, which resulted in a legal breakthrough in Ireland in 2017 following the Committee's invitation in 2016, a breakthrough that could inspire other member States.

In most cases, the workers of digital platforms are employees. If it looks like a duck, swims like a duck and quacks like a duck, then it probably is a duck, but whatever the case it is a worker with fundamental rights at work.

Mr De Meester
Employer (Belgium)

I would like to thank all my colleagues for the commendable set of conclusions.

This Committee in particular had a responsibility, if not a duty, to demonstrate that social dialogue and tripartism are essential to addressing the challenges and realizing the opportunities related to the workplace.

The world is changing at breakneck speed if you observe it from the outside. And the importance of employers and workers together with governments sitting down to discuss their concerns and seeking to find joint solutions remains as vital as ever.

There are myriad challenges and opportunities. However, I would like to focus on two that are a priority for the Employers. First, to continue to remain relevant, the social partners need to self-reflect and adapt to the changing circumstances they face. We have repeatedly heard the word “representativeness” during this past fortnight, and for good reason. A major challenge is improving social partners’ representation around the world. The legitimacy of the social dialogue process and its outcomes depends on this. Second, another challenge and opportunity for the social partners concerns the issue of skills and education, which is increasingly important in the context of rapid digitalization and technological change.

We need to redouble our efforts and adapt education and training curricula, and also the way we deliver education and training, to the changing circumstances. Professional training and reskilling programmes should be in place to more effectively respond to the changing reality of the world of work, support employability and ensure that transitions between jobs are as smooth and as easy as possible. Given their in-depth knowledge of labour market realities, social partners can make a significant contribution in the area of skills and education, in particular through genuine social dialogue processes. Change happens by listening and then starting a dialogue with people who are doing something you do not believe is right.

Mr Parkhouse
Employer (Namibia)

I had the honour of participating in the drafting group of this Committee under the very capable leadership of the Employer Vice-Chairperson, Ms Rudelli. It was a fascinating experience and I echo the points made today that we have, through hard work, dedication and compromise, achieved a good result on this very important topic. I would like to briefly reflect on how the Committee's conclusions can be applied in my country, Namibia.

One priority of our group was to ensure that the discussions and results of this Committee did not take on a purely European perspective and did not focus on a one-size-fits-all approach. It is essential that, in this house, documents are applicable to developed and to developing economies with equal ease.

Social dialogue in Namibia is alive and well, but it could do with a bit of polishing and more development. Its Labour Act is under review, which has been undertaken with tripartite consultations, and I am satisfied that, once that work is completed, the Government will respect the tripartite recommendations.

Namibia has a massive problem with informality. It has an organization called the Namibian Informal Sector Organisation. At its formal launch some three years ago, I invited its members to approach me and offered, at no charge, to assist them in becoming formal. Until today, some three years later, not one has come forward, and when I enquired from their president why, he said, and I quote, "You scared them; they do not want to become formal".

This is one of the biggest challenges that we all face: the informal sector does not want to be subjected to rules and regulations. It does not want to come under the taxation umbrella. The result: lost revenue potential for the State, but, more importantly, lack of protection and rights at work for the workers. We must show these informal traders the benefits of becoming formal. There are examples of informal traders who have become formal. We must identify them and encourage them to show the others the benefits of becoming formal.

Namibia has a very good working tripartite system, but, unfortunately, this is only limited to advisory and labour issues. However, where bipartite agreements are reached, the Government respects these agreements and where necessary sees that the required gazetting takes place to ensure that the agreement becomes legally binding. I am proud and happy to be part of that system.

With this, I thank the Chairperson and my fellow participants in this Committee for achieving such a promising outcome, and I recommend that this august house the conclusions.

The President
(Original French)

I propose that we move on to the approval of the report of the Recurrent Discussion Committee on social dialogue and tripartism, namely the summary of the Committee's proceedings, which appears in paragraphs 1–282 of *Provisional Record* No. 6B, and its appendix.

If there are no objections, may I take it that the Conference approves the Committee's report, bearing in mind that Committee members have until 6 p.m on Friday 15 June to request any corrections to their statements?

(The report – paragraphs 1–282 – and its appendix are approved.)

Resolution and conclusions

Adoption of the conclusions concerning the second recurrent discussion on social dialogue and tripartism

The President
(Original French)

We will now move on to the adoption of the conclusions concerning the second recurrent discussion on social dialogue and tripartism, which are published in *Provisional Record* No. 6A.

If there are no objections, may I take it that the Conference adopts the conclusions part by part, namely the introductory paragraphs and points 1–8?

(The conclusions – the introductory paragraphs and points 1–8 – are adopted part by part.)

If there are no objections, may I take it that the Conference adopts the conclusions as a whole?

(The conclusions are adopted as a whole.)

Adoption of the resolution concerning the second recurrent discussion on social dialogue and tripartism

The President
(Original French)

We will now move on to the adoption of the resolution concerning the second recurrent discussion on social dialogue and tripartism, which also appears in *Provisional Record* No. 6A.

If there are no objections, may I take it that the Conference adopts the resolution?

(The resolution is adopted.)

I would like to thank the members of the Committee and the secretariat for their contributions to the drafting of the report, the conclusions and the resolution. I believe that the atmosphere in the Committee was extremely positive, even though there seem to have been some lively exchanges, and that the delegates in the three groups spared no effort to reach a tripartite consensus.

I thank all the participants and once again congratulate the members and Officers of the Committee.

(The Conference adjourned at 6.10 p.m.)