



# ▶ Record of Proceedings

# 5C

**International Labour Conference – 110th Session, 2022**

Date: 30 June 2022

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## Plenary sitting

Outcomes of the work of the Standard-Setting Committee:  
Apprenticeships

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**Saturday, 11 June 2022, 10.15 a.m.**

**President: Mr Moroni**

## **Presentation and discussion of the outcomes of the Standard-Setting Committee: Apprenticeships**

### **The President (Original Spanish)**

I welcome you to this 12th plenary sitting of the 110th Session of the International Labour Conference.

This morning we will consider for adoption the outcomes of the work of the Standing-Setting Committee: Apprenticeships, namely the Committee's proposed resolution and Conclusions, the texts of which can be found in *Record of Proceedings No. 5A*. The summary of the Committee's proceedings can be found in *Record of Proceedings No. 5B*.

It is my pleasure to welcome the Officers of the Committee and its Reporter, namely: Mr Claudino de Oliveira (Portugal), Chairperson; Mr Barklamb (Australia), Employer Vice-Chairperson; Ms Brown (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), Worker Vice-Chairperson; and Mr Muhyiddin (Indonesia), Reporter.

I give the floor to the Reporter, Mr Muhyiddin, so that he may present to us a summary of the Committee's work. The Officers of the Committee will then take the floor.

### **Mr Muhyiddin Reporter of the Standard-Setting Committee: Apprenticeships**

I am honoured to report back to you on the work of the Standard-Setting Committee: Apprenticeships. The Standard-Setting Committee completed its deliberations in 23 sittings. The discussion was based on Conclusions proposed by the Office for this 110th Session of the Conference in its report entitled *A framework for quality apprenticeships*. Thanks to the excellent facilitation of the Chairperson, and to the significant expertise of the delegates on the subject, the Standard-Setting Committee held in-depth, lively and well-informed discussion in a friendly atmosphere. Even where points of contention appeared, discussions took place in a constructive spirit, and Committee members displayed an express will and commitment to achieve consensus on the 331 amendments proposed.

From the outset, the work of the Committee was expected to address two main aspects: the promotion and the regulation of apprenticeships. We believe these expectations were met with the proposed Conclusions now before you, as they support the expansion and improvement of apprenticeship systems, give a strong message on promoting their attractiveness and offer specific guidance on the rights, entitlements and protection to be granted to apprentices. Indeed, these balanced Conclusions set clear ambitions on further developing apprenticeships as a specific form of learning and work, while keeping in mind the variety of approaches to apprenticeships that currently exist across the world. The Conclusions also underline the importance of existing international labour standards and how the implementation of quality apprenticeship systems will be underpinned at every step by social dialogue.

Allow me to mention here some salient features of the Conclusions that we now present to you. The Standard-Setting Committee agreed that the future instrument should take the

form of a Recommendation. The Committee recognized that promoting and developing quality apprenticeships will respond to current challenges, offer lifelong learning opportunities, enhance productivity and resilience, and meet the current and future needs of apprentices, employers and the labour market. The Committee concluded that, under an effective framework for quality apprenticeships, apprentices should enjoy fundamental principles and rights at work, and should receive adequate remuneration or other financial compensation, social security, leave and other entitlements. The Committee also agreed on the importance of strengthening national apprenticeship systems through a range of targeted measures, so that apprenticeships can contribute to the transition from the informal to the formal economy, among other objectives. In addition, the Committee decided that traineeships differ significantly from apprenticeships and that they fall outside the scope of these Conclusions. However, out of concern about the quality of traineeships, some Committee members emphasized that the matter should be put before the tripartite Screening Group of the Governing Body to consider further action.

I would like to sincerely thank our Chairperson for having fostered a constructive and friendly atmosphere throughout the sittings. I was extremely impressed by his sharp focus on the task at hand and his capacity to lead us, with good humour, toward consensus. I would also like to express my personal appreciation to the two Vice-Chairpersons, the spokesperson of regional groups and other Government delegates. Their collaboration and willingness to compromise ultimately resulted in our Committee being able to present these Conclusions to you. Finally, I would like to thank the Secretariat for its hard work in supporting this Committee.

We know that apprenticeships are tried and tested in facilitating the transition of learners both to the labour market and within it. Simply said, apprenticeships work. Yet, many countries do not use this tool to its full potential. I consider the discussion of the past two weeks to be a breakthrough. We set out in a single document our collective views and knowledge on apprenticeships, and our aspirations on upskilling and implementing quality apprenticeships. I look forward to next year's discussion when the proposed Recommendation will be finalized and submitted to the Conference for adoption. However, the document as it stands can already serve as a source of inspiration for the work of the Organization, the Office and all of us in strengthening national apprenticeship systems and improving the protection of apprentices. With this, I hereby submit the Conclusions of this Standard-Setting Committee to the Conference for adoption.

## **Mr Barklamb**

### **Employer Vice-Chairperson of the Standard-Setting Committee: Apprenticeships**

Our Committee had a responsibility to help ensure that quality apprenticeships contribute to jobs, skills and employability – for as many young people, families, adults and communities as possible and in as many countries as possible. Working together, we made good progress towards meeting this significant and timely responsibility.

Our group set a clear expectation that our work be conducted positively, practically and pragmatically – and that the product of our work, the Recommendation, also meet these standards. I am pleased to say that, reviewing the standard as it is shaping up after the first year, these expectations are being met. The ILO is on track to support more Member States in developing quality apprenticeship systems. The Employers' group wishes to emphasize a few key achievements.

Firstly, the shared view that this instrument take the form of a Recommendation. Its purpose is to raise the quality of apprenticeships in a wide range of jurisdictions. It needs to

be implementable, have practical effect and stand the test of time in a rapidly changing world of work. We are equipping it to play that role. Our document advances a flexible approach to help governments, employers and social partners implement, regulate and promote accessible, needs-based and properly resourced apprenticeship systems in the very wide range of circumstances we heard about over the past two weeks.

Secondly, we value the positive tone of the Conclusions: the recognition that apprentices are part of the formal economy, are able to grow and gain skills and that apprenticeships are a human-centred mechanism for Member States to transition to formality and that apprenticeships can benefit security in the world of work.

Thirdly, we value the true spirit of public-private partnerships at the core of quality apprenticeship systems that is reflected in this text.

For next year's finalization of the Recommendation, further attention will be needed on how Member States incentivize companies to take on apprentices, particular the smallest of organizations, which make up the vast majority of employers throughout the world. Supportive national apprenticeship frameworks, aided by the adoption of the final instrument, will certainly help.

This Recommendation should also promote a culture of continuous learning, skills development and reskilling. It should also address what remains, in some countries, the negative stigma associated with apprenticeships, where many young people, parents and guardians can be reluctant to support or enter into apprenticeships because they are not held in high esteem or well regarded. We have some more work to do on elevating the reputation and perceived value of this very, very important melding of work and skills development.

Finally, we wish to emphasize the veracity of our decision to properly focus our work on apprenticeships. This will add clarity and impact to the final standard we produce next year.

I would like to thank the Employers' group for their tireless input and support. I would also like to thank those who stood beside me and in front of me from the International Organisation of Employers and the Bureau for Employers' Activities. Their work was both invaluable and unceasing.

Our group would also like to thank the Secretariat and its experts for their preparatory work and their work throughout the proceedings.

And I, personally, and my group would like to thank Ms Amanda Brown and her group. Our discussions were conducted in a fine and respectful spirit throughout. We properly and constructively honoured our responsibilities to apprentices and to our communities, and we did so together.

I would also like to thank Government colleagues from throughout the world. I have been coming to the ILO for some time, and this was a particularly strong, constructive and interesting Government group to work with. All speakers contributed to strengthening the text.

I would particularly like to thank our Chairperson, Luis Claudino de Oliveira of Portugal, who not only performed his role very effectively, but did so with a warmth of spirit and sense of humour that was both very welcome and contributed significantly to our successes to date.

We are, as the song lyric goes, only halfway there. However, we should all be very encouraged by our work to date. At the end of year one, our work is properly focused, and we know the target we are working towards. We are on track to better support the young people who stand to benefit from apprenticeships, and all those who stand to benefit from this very

positive work arrangement in more countries, in more communities, and for more individuals in the second half of the twenty-first century and beyond.

For next year, we will need to keep striking the right balance between providing for the necessary protections and system integrity and presenting apprenticeships in a sufficiently positive light to attract people into the apprenticeship system. We will need to remain focused, and we will need to remain positive, practical and pragmatic.

We look forward to working with all of the Committee next year to successfully finalize our work in meeting this commitment of all of us to support quality apprenticeship systems that are characterized by integrity, efficiency and veracity, and that work as well as possible for all those who participate in them.

We commend our work to the Conference.

## **Ms Brown**

### **Worker Vice-Chairperson of the Standard-Setting Committee: Apprenticeships**

We have achieved much in this, the first of our two-year discussion, and I am delighted we are presenting Conclusions which establish the architecture of an international instrument for quality apprenticeships.

Our work has been to provide international expectations for national action. We have included both the regulatory and a promotional framework. We have set out expectations for entitlements and protections for apprentices, and a mechanism to ensure that they know of these. We have included provisions for strong educational input resulting in portable recognized qualifications, which can provide pathways to employment or further study.

We approached this task knowing that the landscape of work-based learning varies markedly between countries and between sectors. The quality of arrangements differs, and there are diverse traditions. For some, an apprenticeship is the first rung on the ladder to a skilled occupation after leaving school. For others, it is the preferred option for the development of high-level skills after the completion of extended studies. And for others still, it offers the hope of a route out of precarious work or the informal economy.

We engaged in the discussion being mindful of the needs of the young and the not so young, those who want to upskill or reskill, those who have been locked out of other routes to developing their potential, and those for whom an apprenticeship is a long-planned step on their way to their chosen career. We were guided in this discussion by our commitment to fundamental principles and rights at work, recognizing that quality apprenticeships can provide a route to decent work. We were guided also by the importance of effective lifelong learning and quality public education. Apprentices need access to expert teaching and training by qualified professionals, and we recognize the value that a strong infrastructure of technical and vocational education and training brings to this.

The Committee's Conclusions reflect the need for apprenticeships to be well regulated, sustainable, sufficiently funded, free from discrimination and exploitation, and to offer protections that can ensure dignity for those who are seeking to join the workforce.

It was of central importance to the Workers' group that our Conclusions should point to the steps that governments need to take to remove barriers and open opportunities. In our discussions, we recognized the role of class discrimination, which can keep routes to personal and professional development beyond reach. Likewise, we recognized the impact of gender stereotypes, which can be so deep-rooted that they not only deny women access but

sometimes even hide that exclusion from them. The text of our Conclusions calls on ILO Members to promote equality, diversity and social inclusion in apprenticeships, and in access to apprenticeships. It urges that special attention is paid to the situation and needs of those in vulnerable situations or belonging to disadvantaged groups. It points out the role that high-quality apprenticeships can play in supporting the move out of precarious and insecure work into security and decent work, and in facilitating the transition from work and training in the informal economy into the formal.

Of course, low pay and low standards of protection also impose barriers. Who would have the opportunity, or take the risk, of taking up an apprenticeship without a guarantee of fair pay and decent conditions? Without these, apprenticeship opportunities are restricted to those who already have deep pockets. Our Committee's agreement that apprentices should receive adequate remuneration or other financial compensation is a huge step forward. This sits alongside protection against long hours and with rights to holidays, sick leave and maternity and family leave. With the clear confirmation that apprentices must be able to exercise their rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining, we expect to see an end to apprentices being told that they are excluded from collective agreements or union representation.

We have also agreed, as would be expected in this house, that the role of the social partners must be fully integrated into the structure of development of quality apprenticeship systems. Trade unions and employers' organizations not only have the expertise but also a clear interest in investing in the training of workers and the development of new skills. We are facing the challenge of rapid transformations in the world of work. Digitalization, changing demographics and the urgent need for a just transition to the zero-carbon economy all require us to look ahead to future skills requirements so that we can realize full, productive and freely chosen employment. Our Conclusions show that the involvement of representative workers' and employers' organizations is central to this, and that they must be welcomed into participation in the design, implementation and evaluation of apprenticeship programmes.

The instrument that this year's Conclusions are forecasting will also house a regulatory framework, measures for capacity-building, and the development of an environment that welcomes and promotes apprenticeships. It will promote their profile, drawing attention to the right to adequate pay and fair conditions, and the benefit of high-quality on- and off-the-job training, which makes apprenticeships such an attractive option.

When we started work in this Committee, we had expected the discussions to extend also into the world of traineeships, a world which encompasses internships and long- and short-term work experience, but without the structured education which is the feature of apprenticeships. After discussion, the Committee determined that these forms of work-based training need special attention and consideration. The Workers' group believes that this needs to be taken up urgently.

I must thank my colleague, Mr Scott Barklamb from the Employers' group, for his dedicated work, which has brought us to good Conclusions. I would also like to thank the Government representatives for their engagement and participation during the two weeks of our discussion. We very much appreciate and admire the exceptional work of the Secretariat team. It was through their thorough preparation that we were able to come to agreement on these Conclusions. And, of course, I must also thank the interpreters and all the other staff who work tirelessly on our behalf, including those such as the caretakers and the restaurant staff, without whom we would not be able to meet and have productive discussions. In particular, I must thank our Chairperson for his very expert, patient and warm-hearted

approach, which ensured that we remained constructive, even through difficult discussions. And most of all, I would like to thank all my colleagues on the Workers' group – including the members of the Drafting Committee, who offered even more of their time – for their unstinting support and guidance over the course of our discussions. I also thank the Workers' secretariat team for their outstanding commitment, hard work, collegiality and friendship.

The work of these two weeks has given us a good basis for a strong standard to be agreed next year when we renew our discussions. We look forward to that process with a view to creating, through our detailed tripartite discussion, an instrument which changes the landscape of apprenticeship provision.

### **Mr Claudino de Oliveira**

#### **Chairperson of the Standard-Setting Committee: Apprenticeships**

After two weeks, we all are still in good shape and looking formidable. That is remarkable, looking from here. It has truly been an honour and a privilege to chair the first discussion of this Standard-Setting Committee on Apprenticeships. Apprenticeships may seem at first an easy subject for social dialogue. We know that they work well. We all have national experiences to contribute, and we all believe that it is important to upscale them. That should form a good basis for discussions.

These deliberations began, indeed, with the shared conviction that apprenticeships can make a real difference in the lives of people who want to move into or within labour markets, and in enterprises' capacity to grow and create jobs. These negotiations were never an intellectual or an abstract exercise; from the beginning, we all wanted to develop a concrete tool for concrete implementation.

Yet, we have seen that apprenticeships can raise many debates, linked not only to the variety of national models, which are more formalized in some places than in others, and to the applicability of international labour standards to apprentices, but also to the capacity of governments to incentivize their expansion in a context of sometimes constrained physical space. In the document that is now before you, we have aimed to reconcile ambition and flexibility. Ultimately, we want a future instrument that we can use to reach the objective we all endeavour to achieve.

We started by agreeing on the nature of this instrument – a Recommendation – and on its scope. In this regard, the Committee decided that traineeships should be left outside the future Recommendation, as they were not expressly included in the task assigned to the Committee, and they differ significantly from apprenticeships. However, some of the Committee members felt that the subject deserves closer attention. Although traineeships are not reflected in the final resolution, I am confident that the proponents of this initiative will find ways to express their request to the Governing Body through other channels.

I am personally very pleased that the document we agreed upon provides tangible approaches to improve the quality of apprenticeships within national systems, including to support transitions to formality and, at the same time, offers detailed guidance on the rights, entitlements and protection of apprentices. If we continue on this good path of consensus-based discussions next year, I am certain the future instrument to be adopted will pave the way for the expansion and promotion of apprenticeship systems and for the improvement of apprentices' protection.

This is a result that can be achieved only by the International Labour Organization, with its unique tripartite mandate that supports meaningful and well-informed dialogue, with true



respect for each other's opinions and views. The Secretary-General's advice was to listen carefully more than we talk and, with this guidance, we were able to build, as a unique global team, a consensus of ambitions that, once adopted, we can all strive to implement. The discussions of the last two weeks have indeed been a remarkable experience of social dialogue in action, and there is no better start for an aspirational document that is intended to be practical and implementable.

These Conclusions are a considerable result for two weeks of work. It would not have been possible without the commitment of all delegates to negotiate and find common ground. For this, I want to thank wholeheartedly the Vice-Chairpersons. I also want to thank the spokespersons of the regional groups, and the other delegates, for their continuous efforts to reach a consensus on sometimes contentious issues. The proposed Conclusions have been enriched by these efforts because they bring together all their perspectives in a single document that is acceptable to all.

I would also like to thank the Reporter, Mr Muhyiddin from Indonesia, and the members of the Drafting Committee for their detailed work, sometimes late into the night. I would like to thank the Secretariat for their long hours of work to support this Committee with excellent expertise and unwavering commitment. I would like to express my particular appreciation to Mr Vines and Mr Reddy for their constant support and advice. I would also like to thank the coordinators, Ms Hofmann, Mr Iriarte Quezada and Ms Pinoargote, for all the continuous support they provided to me. My thanks also go to all the others behind the scenes, including the interpreters, those helping us with amending the text on the screen and the technicians who made the Committee's work possible. With that, I am honoured to present to you the Committee's Conclusions, which I now urge each of you to adopt.

## **The President** (Original Spanish)

I would like to thank the Reporter and each of the Officers of the Committee for the excellent report that they have submitted and for the good work that they have done.

The discussion on the outcomes of the Standard-Setting Committee: Apprenticeships is now open.

## **Mr Fernández** Government (Chile), speaking on behalf of the group of Latin American and Caribbean countries (Original Spanish)

The group of Latin American and Caribbean countries (GRULAC) would like to convey our thanks and appreciation to the representatives of Employers, Workers and Governments for the fruitful discussion that took place in the Committee on Apprenticeships with a view to providing inputs on a guidance document on a framework for quality apprenticeships.

The proposal to have a model concerning a framework for quality apprenticeships recognizes the relevance of apprenticeships for the future of work and the promotion of employability, decent work and productivity.

We greatly appreciate the work of our Chairperson, whose leadership and empathy allowed the Committee to make decisive progress towards reaching its objectives. We also express our appreciation to the Employer and Worker Vice-Chairpersons, who worked tirelessly to reach consensus.

In addition, we would like to thank the Secretariat for its advice and conceptual clarity, which were critical in facilitating our discussion. Our thanks also go to the team of interpreters for their hard work.

Lastly, we would like to express our appreciation for the flexibility provided by the Conclusions and to recognize their great importance in guiding the efforts of Member States, such as those of the countries of our group.

### **Ms Karvar**

#### **Government (France), speaking on behalf of the European Union and its Member States (Original French)**

I am speaking on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. Candidate countries Türkiye, North Macedonia, Serbia, Albania and Ukraine, align themselves with this statement.

We would like to thank our Chairperson for having led the discussions of the Standard-Setting Committee on Apprenticeships in an effective and efficient manner throughout the last two weeks. We thank the social partners, in particular the Vice-Chairpersons, and all the Government delegates for their valuable and engaged contributions in working towards consensus. We also thank the Secretariat for its invaluable support and advice.

As we are all aware, the unique tripartite structure of the ILO, founded on social dialogue, gives an equal voice to workers, employers and governments. Based on this practice, we have agreed on consensus-based Conclusions that will lead to a new Recommendation on quality apprenticeships. Apprenticeships play a pivotal role in tackling unemployment, in particular youth unemployment.

We are convinced that the Conclusions we have developed are an important step towards producing a new Recommendation and towards achieving this goal, by reducing skills mismatches, by improving employment prospects through the acquisition of the skills needed in working life and by improving apprentices' working and learning conditions.

We welcome the fact that the future Recommendation will be fully focused on apprenticeships. It is important that the Recommendation should be devoted to a group that is in great demand on the labour market but is often at risk of exploitation.

Nevertheless, our discussions showed that it would also be interesting and useful for the ILO to work, within a different framework, on the issue of traineeships. Another decisive aspect of these two weeks was the discussion of remuneration or other financial compensation for apprentices. The European Union and its Member States strongly believe that apprentices should be adequately remunerated or financially compensated and therefore welcome the fact that we were able to find common ground.

Once adopted, the Recommendation on quality apprenticeships will state that every apprentice should receive monetary benefits. However, the Conclusions go much further. They promote equal access to apprenticeships, social protection for apprentices, and safe and healthy working conditions. Furthermore, they promote apprenticeships as an attractive learning pathway. These Conclusions form the basis of a Recommendation that will be submitted for adoption next year. The new Recommendation will guide ILO Members on how to ensure quality apprenticeships and will be endorsed by all constituents of the Organization. This is a tremendous success!

The European Union and its Member States acknowledge the pivotal role of the ILO in the world of work, in particular in ensuring quality apprenticeships, and we look forward to being able to adopt a new standard at next year's session of the International Labour Conference.

**Mr Kabir**  
Government (Bangladesh)

We appreciate the hard work of the Committee in drafting the consensus-based text.

Humanity is now at a critical juncture, owing to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Naturally, the world of work is now experiencing new and additional challenges. Hence, sectors of the economy that have shrunk have minimal space to offer to apprenticeships. In the midst of such difficulties, we hope that our sincere and thought-provoking discussion during the International Labour Conference will provide guidelines for the generation waiting to enter the job market.

In this time of neo-normalcy, we see a rising propensity for advanced technology and technological solutions to replace low-skilled tasks. We need to put in place the requisite measures to ensure a balanced approach between low-skilled tasks and technological solutions.

We are optimistic that the regulatory framework for quality apprenticeships, aided by international cooperation, will be effective in addressing the current as well as future challenges in the world of work. Partnership with business entities and closer cooperation among the tripartite partners will be the cornerstone of the success of such a pursuit.

Prior to concluding, Bangladesh would like to request mutual support, greater assistance and enhanced cooperation among Member States to build back better in order to achieve our much-cherished transformation to a world of decent work for all.

**Ms Larsen**  
Employer (Denmark)

Thirteen days ago, we embarked on our work in the Committee. We focused our time and deliberations on the key elements that are crucial to quality apprenticeships. In other words, it is all about pride. Pride in the craft that apprentices are learning. The pride that is evident when you listen to a craftsperson explaining eagerly about her or his knowledge and skills. How do we inspire and motivate people of all ages, first to consider and, second, to do an apprenticeship?

Quality is of course important, but it is not enough. Apprenticeships should be promoted so that more people in our communities consider an apprenticeship as their path to the future. I would like to give one concrete example of an initiative that aims to do exactly that. Each year, an event called "Skills Denmark" takes place over three days. It is a big annual Danish championship for young people from vocational education and training institutes. Over 300 young people participate, competing in various subjects to become the best in the country. The event gives young people the chance to demonstrate their talents. It also helps to raise the professional level and show the outside world, including primary students, the many different and exciting opportunities offered by vocational training. The event is a truly public-private partnership, and the list of sponsors includes public authorities at different levels, the social partners, associations of apprentices and companies, among others.

Lastly, I would just like to say a big thank you to our Chairperson.

## Mr Opio Employer (Uganda)

We arrived here about two weeks ago as experts in our own right, but today I am happy that, having undergone two weeks of rigorous training, we leave as apprentices on a journey into a very beautiful future. Social dialogue at its best. The recognition that all views are valuable. We were expected to cover a lot of ground beyond the call of responsibility. In the end, we agreed that the right thing to do is to focus on apprenticeships. We raised the bar to a new level in the field of quality apprenticeships, that is, that “Members should take measures to promote the recognition of completed apprenticeship qualifications nationally, regionally and internationally”. We go home with Conclusions that will form the basis of what will, we hope, be our certification of the Recommendation next year.

It is a huge privilege to have been part of this Committee, which embraced the clarion call from our Employer lead, the clarion call to be positive, pragmatic and, of course, practical. Mr Scott Barklamb, I thank you very much. As the Vice-Chairperson from the Employers’ group, you did excellent work. I thank the Worker Vice-Chairperson. I thank everyone who was involved in this Committee: our colleagues, the governments, the International Organisation of Employers, the Secretariat, the interpreters, the technicians and everyone else. Like my sister from Barbados said, our work has just begun.

## Ms Williams Worker (Barbados)

Mahatma Gandhi once said: “Live as if you were to die tomorrow, but learn as if you were to live forever.” Having been in these discussions, when you hear the term “apprenticeship”, you cannot help but think of opportunities for growth and development. You think now of structured, hands-on learning and, most importantly, you think of the enabling of a society that is fit for purpose and equipped for our future.

In these 23 sittings, what was very clear to this social partnership is that we see apprenticeships as an industry-driven and high-quality pathway for social, economic and human stability. Where employers can develop and prepare an equipped, talent-driven workforce. Where governments will have skilled experts in a number of areas, filling voids and providing cushioning to those countries that are currently experiencing massive brain drain. And where workers can obtain paid work experience, and all of the benefits and qualities that an employee deserves.

And so it is without a doubt that we all wanted to ensure that we do not just speak to a standard on apprenticeships, but rather one of quality apprenticeships. I dare to say that we are all on the same page in seeing the importance of putting measures in place to facilitate the transition from the classroom to the workplace, and the importance, of course, of developing and matching skills to meet both employer and worker needs, with the intention of increasing and promoting global productivity and sustainable organizations, enterprises and communities, all while building solid foundations for our people so that we can own our skills and abilities.

This, I assure you, is of paramount importance to my country, Barbados. This move is the propellant that we intend to use in our rocket to launch us into a space where we not only continue to have high numbers of graduates each year entering the employment game, but also high numbers of skilled, innovative workers entering the job market, who already possess the job know-how, and, of course, the ability to do the job.

All this to say that our work has only just begun. My hope is that we leave here with the intention of lobbying for quality apprenticeships, with the intention also of removing some of those misperceptions of what an apprenticeship programme is supposed to be, while expressing the importance of upskilling, reskilling and re-tooling our people, to make sure that no man is left behind.

I leave you now with the words of Mahatma Gandhi again: "You may never know what results may come of your actions, but if you do nothing, there will be no results. The future depends on what we do in the present."

**Mr Hinriksson**  
**Worker (Iceland)**

I want to start by thanking the Workers for the opportunity to speak on the effects of our work the last two weeks on young people from around the world. Attending the International Labour Conference for the first time, it has been with great interest and enthusiasm that I have followed the work and the debate in this Committee.

Being a former apprentice and now an electrician working in Iceland, I can in full honesty say that I did not choose an apprenticeship to make my government happy, nor to please a future boss, nor to secure the gross domestic product of my country. I chose an apprenticeship because I sought a life of opportunities and of economic freedom, and I saw an apprenticeship with quality education being the key to achieve that. If this Committee wants to get more people, especially young people around the world like me, from Uruguay to Burkina Faso, from the Lao People's Democratic Republic to little Iceland, to share my view on apprenticeship, then it must accept that the new ILO instrument that it will hopefully finalize at the next session has to be a source of both responsibilities and rights.

With the final instrument, apprentices within the informal economy will have a structure on how to get into a quality apprenticeship and use that as a guide on the way out of informality and into the formal economy. The instrument will also help developing countries with a large informal economy to get on the right path towards a formal economy, and they will therefore have a better chance to increase social justice, to develop and to eradicate poverty.

**Mr Mier**  
**Worker (Australia)**

I would like to thank the Australian Council of Trade Unions for the opportunity to represent Australian workers in this forum. It is my first time here, and the amount of work that goes on to conduct these plenaries is astounding. There are many dedicated people doing their bit to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to be involved. So, on that basis, I would also like to thank the governments here, especially the Government of Australia, and specifically Alistair Sage. I would also like to thank my fellow trade unionists who were here, as we all contributed to try to achieve better outcomes for working people.

The proposed Conclusions that were debated within the standard-setting discussion on apprenticeships provide a basis for a Recommendation, and I feel privileged to have played my small part in this process. We hope that we will deliver an opportunity for apprentices around the world to improve their lot in life. The document will make it clear to Member States that they should pay apprentices adequate remuneration or other financial compensation, ensure that an apprenticeship agreement is in place that clearly identifies the parties' respective roles and rights, including protections for leave, hours and duration of work and occupational health

and safety, and ensure the quality and diversity of opportunity and access to apprenticeships. This also provides an opportunity for older workers to change their employment with the knowledge that there will be protections available to them.

While the Workers' group advocated for expanding the ambit, agreement was not reached to refer explicitly to trainees in the Recommendation. Some of the governments supported this, but a lot did not. If we cannot protect the rights of trainees now, a highly exploitable group, then when will we try to protect them? This is a missed opportunity, and to quote the Secretary-General of the Conference, Guy Ryder, at the World of Work Summit yesterday, "We must not lose sight of our vision for a better future of work. The hopes and dreams of millions depend on us. We cannot let them down."

Also, I caution against the recognition of apprentice qualifications that are not of a similar educational and technical standard. This not only drives down standards, but potentially also leads to occupational health and safety issues for both the public and workers.

Finally, it was mentioned during our discussions here that there is a need for promotion of apprenticeships because they are wrongly seen as a lesser path, not as valuable as other academic pursuits, and that there is a stigmatization of apprenticeships – an image problem – or even that they are a low-grade pathway. Well, there were four electricians here on the Workers' group. That is four tradesmen who have benefited from the pathway that an apprenticeship provides. That is four people who are now participating in a conference at the International Labour Organization, including me, who started as a 16-year-old apprentice electrician on the waterfront in Melbourne, Australia, and is now addressing you here. This is not a lesser path.

## Resolution and Conclusions

### Proposed Conclusions: Adoption

#### The President

(Original Spanish)

Let us now move on to the adoption of the proposed Conclusions of the Standard-Setting Committee: Apprenticeships, the text of which is contained in *Record of Proceedings* No. 5A.

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

**(The Conclusions are adopted.)**

### Resolution to place on the agenda of the next ordinary session of the Conference an item entitled "Apprenticeships": Adoption

#### The President

(Original Spanish)

Let us now move to the adoption of the resolution to place on the agenda of the next ordinary session of the Conference an item entitled "Apprenticeships".

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

**(The resolution is adopted.)**

I would like to congratulate the members of the Committee and the Secretariat for their tireless work. The first discussion took place in a constructive atmosphere and it was possible to lay the foundations for the Recommendation to be considered next year. Furthermore, I understand that it was patently clear during the Committee's work that the social partners have a key role to play in respect of apprenticeships.

**(The Conference continues its work in plenary.)**