



Fourteenth sitting

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Presidents: Mr Sukayri and Mr Alburquerque de Castro

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

The PRESIDENT

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

Mr VIZJAK (*Minister of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, Slovenia*)

It is my great honour to be able to participate at this 101st Session of the International Labour Conference. The values promoted by the ILO have never had such importance as they do today. Youth employment, the social protection floor and fundamental rights are key topics at this time of crisis and the International Labour Conference is a unique opportunity to share good practice and policies that can contribute to better outcomes. It has been many years since our society has faced challenges as serious as those we are facing today.

The challenges we face in the context of the current crisis have an enormous impact on labour market volatility and limited national budgets. To enable faster recovery, Slovenia has adopted various measures, including amending legislation on intervention steps that aim to contribute to the stabilization of public finances.

Slovenia is a country with a strong social component. Therefore, despite the crisis, our aim is avoid any significant decrease in the level of social protection and enjoyment of individual rights, in order to protect our most vulnerable members of society.

General discussion on the youth employment crisis is on the agenda for today. We are all aware that young people are bearing a large proportion of the burden of the crisis and its consequences. Finding concrete and innovative solutions for young people's employability and their faster transition into the labour market is of utmost importance. Slovenia is experiencing rising unemployment rates, along with the rest of Europe. We have decided to act, together with young people and for young people.

Our response to youth unemployment has resulted in tailor-made measures, focused on higher employability, a renewed scholarship system and above all, an improved safety net. By adopting the new Labour Market Regulation Act, we have extended the period of benefits eligibility, raised the level of benefits and introduced lifelong career guidance. Young people are a priority group within our active

labour market policy and fast activation is offered to every young person within the first four months of unemployment.

To stimulate job creation, subsidies and tax exemptions are part of activation measures for young people, including those seeking their first job, graduate candidates and young people searching for their professional path. Additionally, the introduction of self-employment schemes is becoming an attractive career choice for young people.

Furthermore, one of the main priorities of the changes planned for labour legislation is to reduce the segmentation of the labour market between workers employed on fixed-term contracts and those employed on permanent contracts, especially by reducing the difference in rights arising from different forms of contractual agreements.

We are all aware that the youth of today is the future of our society. We should not allow their competences, energy and motivation to be lost. Thanks to the Conference, I am confident we have taken a step forward in terms of innovative solutions and creative thinking.

I would like to stress that, despite the continuing crisis, it is important to maintain the right balance between economic reality and social needs. Social dialogue on all levels has to be the answer to this balance.

Original Arabic: Mr MOHAMED FAQIH (Representative, Council of Ministers of Labour and Social Affairs in Gulf Cooperation Council States)

At the outset, I have the pleasure to greet you all as partners in this venerable Organization, in which we work together to achieve our common aims in promoting and consolidating the standards of decent work, and human dignity.

On behalf of the Government delegates of the Council of Ministers of Labour and Social Affairs in Gulf Cooperation Council States, I have also the pleasure to address this august Conference, and wish to extend our warm congratulations to the President of the Conference, on his election to preside over its deliberations. My congratulations are also extended to the Vice-Presidents of the groups, and I wish the Officers every success in their work.

I would also like to congratulate the Director-General, and pay tribute to him on his efforts to promote the aims of this ancient Organization throughout the past few years. I wish the new Director-General-elect every success in making the Organization move ahead towards better working prospects.

The countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, in their attempt to develop the labour market, have made significant steps at the legislative level. Thus, the number of ratifications of the fundamental international labour Conventions increased more than two-fold during the last decade. We also carried out several initiatives and measures to develop the labour market, protect workers' rights, and disseminate decent work.

In 2008, the Abu Dhabi dialogue was launched. It resulted in establishing the principle of cooperation between labour-exporting and labour-importing countries. One of the examples of such cooperation is the initiative, soon to be launched between the United Arab Emirates and India, on the electronic verification of contracts aimed at promoting transparency in contracts. This will provide workers with the opportunity to review their conditions of employment before their travel abroad. With respect to social protection, the United Arab Emirates has sought, since its establishment, to provide a decent life to its citizens, as reflected in the first United Nations *World Happiness Report*, which deals with indicators of happiness and satisfaction among peoples. The Emirates within the Arab countries group occupied first position in this report, and came in the 17th position at the global level.

With respect to the regulation of the labour market and the provision of social protection, the Kingdom of Bahrain made numerous strides, the most important of which is to maintain the unemployment rate at 4 per cent; and apply the system of unemployment benefits. It further consolidated trade union freedoms; supported social dialogue among the three social partners; authorized free mobility of migrant labour; and safeguarded the rights of domestic workers in the new Labour Code. The Kingdom also raised the level of wages of a large number of workers especially university degree holders; and intensified training and rehabilitation programmes for the national labour force. With regard to promoting transparency, the Kingdom publishes statistical reports on a periodic and regular basis, which includes the most significant indicators of the labour market.

In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, a set of initiatives and programmes aimed at increasing job opportunities for the sons and daughters of the Kingdom was launched. In particular, a programme called "*Nitaqat*" (Perspectives) was introduced. It is based on providing incentives to enterprises so as to reach the targeted settlement rates. A new programme on women's empowerment was also launched, the aim of which is to increase women's contribution in the production process. A national programme on providing support to small enterprises was also initiated with a view to developing business leadership and the concept of self-employment.

In the Sultanate of Oman, several amendments were made to national legislation, which regulates the relationship between the social partners. This is intended to improve labour force protection by regulating: hours of work; a minimum weekly rest period of two consecutive days; paid leave; paid maternity leave for 50 days; and workers' protection against arbitrary dismissal. This would serve the labour market system, contribute towards developing the work environment, achieve increased production, and promote relationships among the social partners.

As for the State of Qatar, it has consolidated its legislation and regulations by adding new and recent provisions directly related to labour affairs and workers, set within the framework of providing legal protection to the working categories in Qatar. The Government also promulgated a legislative instrument which applies several sections of the Labour Code to workers employed in agriculture and animal husbandry, after their exclusion from the application of the Labour Code. The decision also includes the need to conclude contracts for workers employed in agriculture, which include paid annual holidays and paid weekly rest.

In the State of Kuwait, concrete and positive measures have been adopted within the framework of providing maximum protection to workers. Thus, an Act which relates to work in the private sector was recently promulgated. It takes into account the provisions of international labour standards. The State of Kuwait has also adopted legislative measures, of which the primary aim is to regulate the labour market, protect workers, and reduce the trafficking of persons. Several decisions have also been issued so as to reduce the sponsorship system as a first step towards its elimination.

In the Republic of Yemen, a Social Health Insurance Act was promulgated in 2011, adding to the whole body of legislation on social security. It reiterates the Government's concern to integrate issues of justice and equality in legislation.

I would like to commend the Director-General, on his Report: *The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories*, which reiterates the need for strengthened technical cooperation in support of workers in Palestine and the occupied Arab territories.

Original Portuguese: Mr GOMES PROENÇA (Worker, Portugal)

This Conference is taking place at a very important time internationally since the ILO is increasingly expected to take strong action in defence of the social dimension of globalization and in opposition to the crisis. I extend very special greetings to the Director-General, Dr Juan Somavia, during this, his last Conference. With him the ILO strengthened its role in defence of decent work, tripartite social dialogue, globalization with social justice and respect for the Conventions. With Juan Somavia, the ILO has gained clout and respect internationally and strengthened its ability to dialogue with the social partners and governments. I extend greetings also to the new Director-General-elect, Guy Ryder. With his experience and dynamism I am sure he will continue the work which has been carried out and introduce a new dynamic in his relationship with the social partners enhancing the role of ILO in the governance of globalization.

The international crisis continues, unemployment is rising and many countries are suffering from the effects of financial speculation and the lack of regulation of their financial sector. To overcome the crisis, it is essential to have policies that preserve employment and reduce inequalities. Public and private investments are needed to promote wage increases and competitiveness.

Austerity is not the solution to these problems. Instead, it is essential to have economic and social development and to place the rights of workers at the centre of the world economy. The international crisis has also shown that those who defended neo-

liberal policies and thought that markets were self-regulating were wrong. We need to have a better sovereign and social State, stronger participation and policies geared towards job creation and preservation. These are the policies we are fighting for in Portugal, where workers, and young people in particular, have been cruelly hit by unemployment and domestic and foreign attempts to deregulate society and the labour market. We have vigorously opposed these attempts, and there is an urgent need for growth and employment policies that comply with our existing tripartite commitments.

Globalization continues to be dominated by the economic dimension with no social or environmental regulation, and is exposed to the negative effects of unrestricted flows of capital and the uncontrolled actions of multinationals.

We want a different globalization and an end to the kind of protectionism that makes the strong even stronger. We want a globalization with no social and environmental dumping or unfair competition. The ILO Recommendations and Conventions play a key role. The social clauses in international trade agreements should be based on ILO instruments, particularly the eight core Conventions. Freedom of association and collective bargaining must be respected and efforts must be made to combat discrimination and completely prohibit the worst forms of exploitation.

We condemn the attitude at this Conference of the Employers' representatives who have impeded the work of the Committee on the Application of Standards. Their attitude provides cover for those who do not abide by their commitments and violate human rights.

There are two completely different categories of countries that have not ratified ILO Conventions and the core Conventions in particular. There are those who have not ratified them because they do not respect the Conventions and then there are other States that respect the principles and rights in the Conventions but have not ratified them because they are incompatible with certain provisions in their national laws or national practices.

We feel that the ILO needs to reflect upon the advantages and disadvantages of accepting, on the basis of a unanimous decision, ratifications by countries which have more advanced laws and practices even though they do not fully comply with every provision of a Convention.

Decent work with appropriate social protection, rights and no job insecurity should be the basis of social and economic organization. The agenda of this Conference covers core issues such as youth employment, the social protection floor, and compliance with the Conventions.

In conclusion, I will say that trade unions play a key role in the definition of social and economic policies. Freedom of association must be respected, and free and autonomous collective bargaining along with tripartite social dialogue must take place. Assertive and proactive trade unionism enables us to enter into dialogue and make commitments, and we consider the Global Jobs Pact and the Decent Work Agenda, adopted on a tripartite basis by the ILO, to be the basis for our activities.

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

Let me preface my remarks by congratulating you and your Vice-Presidents on your election to the

state procedures of this Conference. I pledge my full support and that of my delegation.

I am privileged to be part of this 101st Session of the International Labour Conference. This Conference is taking place at a time when the world is experiencing uncertainty with regard to the global economic trends. In the not-so-distant past, we were under the impression that recovery from the global economic crisis was underway. Indeed, there were signs of improvement in the global economic forecast. There were also improvements in the number of jobs created and this gave us hope that we would not see undesirable labour entrenchment. However, there are more and more signs that we are not yet out of the woods; we are under the impression that the global economic crisis has not gone away and that it has never reached this level of intensity. Weak job data and deteriorating market indices in some developed countries are exacerbating these fears.

In order to reduce its budget deficit and to prepare the economy for a possible second economic slowdown, Botswana has taken measures such as implementing budget cuts and freezing all development projects. Despite all this, we are finding ourselves in a very vulnerable position because our economy, though robust, is still vulnerable given its dependence on the mineral sector.

For countries with a small economic base like Botswana, there is a need to improve the resilience of the economy through pursuing economic diversification more strongly. Economic diversification, therefore, remains at the top of our priorities as it will lead to economic growth, create job opportunities, and raise living standards in Botswana. Our Economic Diversification Drive Strategy is a reaffirmation of this commitment. The measures that we as a country are putting in place to remedy the problems that confront us, are aimed at mitigating the negative effects of the economic downturn. I can report that we are not doing badly.

An important lesson we have learnt is that economic recovery without job creation is unsustainable. Consequently, employment creation remains an integral part of efforts to promote economic growth. Equally important is the fact that the sustenance of quality jobs requires enhanced productivity. In this regard, a consultative forum on work ethics is scheduled later this month. The forum will be an awareness-raising platform, as well as a stage for drawing up an action programme to promote good work ethics.

A lot needs to be done to fulfil the expectations of our people.

Young people in particular require special attention. National statistics on unemployment show that the youth are hardest hit as far as unemployment is concerned. The persistent global economic slowdown paints a gloomy picture. With specific reference to our situation, the Government has come up with several interventions aimed at addressing youth unemployment and ensuring that budget cuts do not cause a slowdown in private sector activity. As a result, mega-development projects have been allowed to continue, despite the economic downturn.

As a country we are approaching youth empowerment issues with the seriousness and the urgency they deserve. In this regard, allow me to reiterate the words of our President, His Excellency Lieutenant General Seretse Khama Ian Khama. In his State

of the Nation address in November 2011 he said, that Government had no greater priority than empowering our future by empowering our youth. Pursuant to this objective, the Government has introduced a number of programmes which aim to create more employment and business opportunities for young people. In addition, budgetary provision has been made to address the mismatch between skills development and market requirements by providing practical skills and knowledge-enhancing facilities in school. Furthermore, the National Internship Programme, which was introduced in 2009, provides university graduates with skills and on-the-job learning experience, in order to fill the experience gap.

Our efforts to promote youth empowerment culminated in a youth empowerment summit in May this year. The objective of this summit was to give stakeholders an opportunity to deliberate on the problems that are confronting young people, as well as to come up with strategies that would facilitate the engagement of young people in productive and sustainable economic activities.

For the ILO to find it fitting to bring the attention of the social partners to the plight of young people is commendable. It is my earnest hope that the resolutions reached at this Conference will enrich the policy debate on youth empowerment in my country. Failure on our parts to act now will be a recipe for disaster. We would like the ILO to be more responsive to the needs and aspirations of working women and men, families, households, and small enterprises the world over. The ILO must play a leading role in providing guidance and encouragement to the workers, employers and governments to work together in harmony for the good of all and for all those involved, to fulfil their unalienable responsibility – ensuring the greater national goals of prosperity for all.

Through the Decent Work Country Programme, we are hoping to come up, among others, with a model that will enhance the effectiveness of social dialogue among the social partners. The need to come up with improvements in this area is necessitated by the apparent differences among workers, employers, and governments. Some of these differences, although small, end up becoming major sources of industrial discomfort. We are looking forward to working together with the ILO in this regard. I am optimistic that the rich exchange of information, views, and ideas in this Conference will shape the future direction of the ILO and its relationship with governments, employers, and workers across the globe.

Original Bulgarian: Mr MLADENOV (Minister of Labour and Social Policy, Bulgaria)

On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Bulgaria and on my personal behalf, I would like to congratulate the President, the Vice-Presidents and Mr Ryder, on their elections. I am glad to have the opportunity to participate in the exchange of views in the context of extremely important issues that have been raised for consideration during this year's session of the Conference: the fundamental principles and rights at work, youth employment and social protection.

I would like to support the conclusion in the speech of the Director-General at the opening of the Conference on the need for socially responsible policies to overcome the consequences of the crisis

and the important role of social dialogue in achieving productive employment and better social protection. In the context of the current situation, there is no doubt that the Global Jobs Pact is an important instrument, both for Europe and the rest of the world. In this connection, I would like to present to you some of the measures undertaken by the Bulgarian Government concerning youth employment, which are of particular importance today, especially given the topics of the Conference.

I believe that youth employment is a common concern both for the countries of the European area and the rest of the world. The exchange of views on this topic is essential. I would like to greet the International Labour Office and congratulate them on hosting the global Youth Employment Forum preceded by national consultations with representatives of youth organizations from all regions.

I share the opinion stated in the Report, *The youth employment crisis: Time for action*, that it is necessary for labour market policies to be linked to effective policies on education and training to enable young people to acquire jobs skills to enter the labour market. Stimulating young people by providing easier access to registration when looking for a job using an individual approach, as well as increasing competitiveness through motivational training and other activities, can be considered priority areas for tackling youth unemployment. Bulgaria has reported the good use of vouchers for training as a flexible learning tool for young people. We support the transition from education to employment by providing a first job, internships, apprenticeships and subsidized employment. We focus on disadvantaged young people in developing and implementing active labour market policies.

The abovementioned activities are enshrined in the Jobs for Young People in Bulgaria national initiative, adopted by the Bulgarian Government in March 2012. This initiative combines the efforts of public institutions and social partners to reduce unemployment and inactivity among young people under 29 years of age. In implementing the national initiative on 6 June this year, the Government and the social partners signed the First Job national agreement which shared their common opinion that support for young people is a national issue. Young people in Bulgaria are one of the priority target groups for all operations under the 2007–13 Human Resources Development Operational Programme as we implement measures aimed specifically at this group.

In conclusion, I would like to share my conviction that the crisis in youth employment can be overcome by outlining common priorities, by enhanced coordination and global partnerships, processes in which the ILO will continue to play a leading role with due regard to its history, structure and mission.

Ms SUNDNES (Worker, Norway)

This year's Conference has been very special. I will concentrate my intervention around three specific points.

This is Mr Somavia's last Conference as Director-General of the ILO. He has led the ILO in a professional and determined way. Through his leadership, the ILO has become one of the better known UN institutions. Important questions for the world of work, like the Decent Work Agenda, have been developed under his leadership. I am happy that the Norwegian Government has followed up this

Agenda by setting up their national agenda demanding that the ILO core Conventions be integrated in our development aid work, in our foreign policy as such, as well as in our trade agreements with other countries. I am not sure that this would have happened so quickly had it not been for the ILO's push for decent work.

Another good achievement is the relationship that has developed between the ILO, the World Bank and the IMF. To a large extent, there is now policy coherence between these institutions, and the core Conventions are accepted as fundamental rights and principles to be respected and followed. Thank you, Mr Somavia, for these achievements.

Another very special and dear point to the Workers is the election of Mr Ryder as the new Director-General of the ILO. Needless to say, the Norwegian workers look forward to working with Mr Ryder and the ideas that he represents. We are sure that, under his leadership, the ILO will focus and further develop the golden principles for the world of work: tripartism, social dialogue, freedom of association and collective bargaining. We pledge our support for this work.

It is impossible not to mention the very shocking and negative experience the Workers had at this year's Conference: the Employers' behaviour in the Committee on the Application of Standards; their denial of the right to strike as an integral part of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87); and their attack on the Committee of Experts as well as the ILO/Office of the Legal Adviser. We are convinced that there must be established and respected international rules protecting workers who are fighting for their legal and democratic rights, including the right to strike. Because of the uncompromising attitude of the Employers, no cases have been discussed at this year's Conference, the consequence being that many workers now fall victim to the bad practice of governments. What will be the personal and political situation for many workers in the year to come? I fear the situation that they are faced with.

In Norway, we will do our best to change the behaviour and opinions of our employers. They do respect the right to strike at home. Why should they not show solidarity with workers who are in a much worse situation than we are and who need to be protected by ILO rules and procedures?

As in previous years, the Director-General has also presented a Report on *The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories*. It gives a fair and well informed picture of the situation the Palestinians are faced with. Unfortunately, the situation for the Palestinian people is not getting better, but worse. More settlements are being illegally built. This means less land for an increasing population. Youth unemployment is increasing, and the fact that 71 per cent of the Palestinian people are below the age of 30 makes this an enormous challenge. I can promise our continued support to the Palestinian people.

I will conclude my intervention by pointing out the sad truth that women are still not fairly represented at the International Labour Conference. In fact, the proportion of women among delegates and advisers has decreased. This is, in my view, a shame. It is the responsibility of the governments and the social partners to establish concrete measures to correct this. The Governing Body must take this issue very seriously and come forward with

concrete proposals to remedy this unfair situation. I now expect my own Workers' group to come up with new measures, and urge employers and governments to do the same.

Mr TANIGAWA (*Employer, Japan*)

I would like to begin by thanking Director-General, Juan Somavia, for his enormous contribution to the ILO.

Soon after his appointment in March 1999, he used the phrase "decent work" to highlight the importance of productive employment and to call upon countries to address the respective issues they faced.

Considering the economic ups and downs we have experienced since then, his words and actions were extremely insightful. I believe that the "decent work" concept will continue to be useful as countries always strive to provide better job opportunities in accordance with their own levels of development.

Prior to this Conference, the Governing Body elected a successor to this first-rate leader. Regardless of the details presented in campaign manifestos, I hope that Mr Guy Ryder, the Director-General-elect, will contribute to effectively resolving issues faced by governments, workers and employers around the world, while efficiently managing the ILO, on the basis of the motto "do more with less", an approach that Japanese enterprises adopt as a matter of course.

The policy scope of the ILO, namely the fields of employment and labour, remains unchanged since these fields are profoundly affected by economic, fiscal and monetary policies. The ILO has, especially in recent years, stressed the importance of coherency in domestic policies within a country and policy harmonization in international settings.

Domestic and international policy harmonization and implementation of growth strategies are pressing issues for all members, particularly as countries in Europe and elsewhere face severe fiscal constraints. Now is the time for the ILO to exercise leadership in this regard.

As a prerequisite to such efforts, we need to consider what is required to achieve economic growth and increase employment. The ILO should base its various activities on the undeniable fact that it is the corporate sector that generates productive employment.

This Conference has worked out a Recommendation on the social protection floor, and there has been a general discussion on the youth employment crisis. The primary responsibility for creating social protection floors lies with governments.

However, where will the necessary financial resources come from? They will come from business activity, which drives economic growth and generates employment, resulting in workers and employers paying their respective taxes and social security premiums. Thus, the truly key players in supporting social protection floors are companies and workers.

Securing and expanding employment opportunities for young people are major issues in all countries at present. We have seen examples of the public sector providing temporary youth employment opportunities. In reality, these too are funded by taxes collected as a result of corporate activity, and such programmes alone are problematic from the perspective of long-term sustainability. Creating employment opportunities for young people through

the revitalization of business is essential and sustainable.

It is important to remember that support for corporate activity is a key requirement for success in addressing these two themes.

Protection of fundamental principles and rights is vital for the fair distribution of the fruits of growth resulting from brisk corporate activity. On this point, I hope the ILO will not merely pursue the formal ratification of Conventions, but rather create an environment where countries can make active efforts by sharing information on best practices with member States so that fundamental principles are effectively implemented.

In this regard, the three topics discussed at this Conference should not be regarded as completely separate subjects, but rather as interrelated issues requiring coordinated policies within the ILO.

On behalf of Japan's employers, I sincerely hope that the new Director-General will lead the ILO in the direction I have outlined, and, in particular, take a balanced approach in listening to the views of governments, workers, and employers.

(Mr Alburquerque de Castro takes the Chair.)

Original Spanish: Mr DOMÍNGUEZ BRITO (Government, Dominican Republic)

I would like to begin by congratulating Mr Guy Ryder on his election as the new Director-General and reiterate how committed we are to the objectives of this Organization in the search for decent work and the creation of more and better jobs.

For the Dominican Republic, it is a great honour to be able to participate in this august Conference every year, where governments and social partners can freely discuss social and labour issues that affect the entire world. On this occasion, once again, we have been discussing the importance of decent work for young people as a pivotal element in achieving sustainable development. This year, discussion has taken place in the context of an employment crisis that has significantly affected young people. In the Dominican Republic, the unemployment rate has risen. For those aged 18 to 29, the rate is almost double that of Dominican adults. Quality of employment is also a particularly important issue for young people, because most young people work primarily in the informal sector, where wages are low and opportunities for career development and training are practically non-existent.

In the light of this, the Dominican Republic is making extraordinary efforts to develop a programme called "Youth and Employment", with the aim of improving the employability of its young population through technical training and vocational placements, particularly targeted at socially disadvantaged young people, in order to promote the formal jobs market, where there are better-quality and better-paid jobs. To date, the programme has benefited around 60,000 young people, more than 50 per cent of them women, bearing in mind that young women are particularly vulnerable to unemployment.

In the next phase of this programme, we will focus on developing youth entrepreneurship. In the Dominican Republic, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises are the main source of work. We need to see them as sources of employment, spaces for creating new skills, and an important part of the economy. We need to ensure that these businesses

are brought into the formal sector so that their workers can enjoy full access to the social security system.

As the President of the Conference has said, we need many jobs for young people, but they must be decent, secure, high-quality jobs, which are attractive not because of the precarious conditions imposed by employers, but because of the productivity levels of those offering their services within an employment relationship that guarantees their rights. Guaranteeing full social protection is another of the major challenges being discussed by this Conference.

In an international context in which unemployment, poverty and social exclusion persist, truly affecting the most vulnerable, developing social protection floors is fundamental. The discussions held in the Committee on the Social Protection Floor and the final draft Recommendation on national social protection floors are a timely response to the situation of exclusion that we see today.

Finally, I would like to express my thanks to the International Labour Organization for giving us the opportunity to share these experiences, and I would like to reiterate the Dominican Republic's commitment to the development of social security measures, above all. Over the last ten years, almost half of the population has come to benefit from formal social security.

Original Portuguese: Mr GOMES ESTEVES (Employer, Portugal)

On behalf of the Portuguese Employers' delegation, I would like to congratulate the President on his election and wish him every success in his work leading this Conference.

This year's session of the Conference has a very important agenda dealing with major issues such as social protection, fundamental principles and rights at work, and the youth employment crisis. As I have just a few minutes to address you, I will deal solely with the crisis in youth employment.

As we all know, the European economic situation was and still is being adversely affected by a serious economic and financial crisis. Illustrations of this are the obstacles in access to financing faced by enterprises and the increased number of closures and interruptions of activity affecting companies. On the social level, we can see increased unemployment, particularly amongst young people. In Portugal, the youth unemployment rate in the 15–24 age group is above 35 per cent. So there is an urgent need to find answers aimed at fostering economic growth. This is the only way of promoting employment and growth.

The fight against youth unemployment also means that we should encourage the hiring of young people, giving them contacts and experience. Flexible forms of contracting and also support for retraining are also important in this context, and vocational placements are also important instruments for achieving these goals. On the other hand, it is vitally important that young people who have dropped out of the labour market are reintegrated in it. Technological innovation and the rapid pace of change in production processes mean that skills need to be constantly updated.

During the meeting of the G20 Task Force on Employment, which took place in Mexico City on 15 December 2011 and focused on youth employment, companies called for the adoption of a whole

range of measures in a statement entitled “Business Priorities for Youth Employment”. These measures are aimed at improving the employability of young people, particularly through education, training and lifelong learning, creating inclusive and active labour market programmes, and also promoting youth entrepreneurship.

The present situation is extremely serious. Nevertheless, we feel that by making joint efforts and promoting understanding, solutions can be found across the world, in Europe and in Portugal that will enable us to overcome these current constraints and challenges.

Original Spanish: Ms VÉLEZ JUÁREZ (Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, Mexico)

I would like to begin by paying tribute to the work of Mr Juan Somavia, Director-General of the International Labour Organization, who will conclude his term as the head of this Organization in September. His main legacy, decent work, stresses the importance of humanizing jobs and recognizing human dignity, particularly in times like these.

As we all know, the economic recovery following the crisis remains weak, and yet economic difficulties should not present an obstacle to achieving decent work. On the contrary, this should remain the goal which we pursue in our government policies on labour. The administration of President Felipe Calderón has been characterized by respect for the rule of law, based on legality, impartiality, legal certainty and transparency. The Mexican Government has acted decisively with employers’ and trade union organizations to promote safer workplaces with better conditions, for higher business productivity and the well-being of workers. Social dialogue is crucial to these efforts.

In Mexico, the current administration has promoted sustained, inclusive, multi-stakeholder dialogue through conciliation, and we thus have been able to achieve unprecedented levels of harmony at work, where understanding and agreement prevail.

As we all know, young people, women and vulnerable groups have been hit hardest by the global crisis. In my country, we have strengthened the jobs services offered at the government level, which help to align supply and demand for jobs and match workers’ skills with employers’ needs, saving the time and costs associated with finding work.

As part of the government policies, we have broadened social protection floors so that they are more adequate and inclusive, as is the case of universal health insurance. Mexico is presiding over the G20 this year and I had the honour of presiding over the meeting of the ministers of labour and employment last May, which had participation and support from the ILO. The labour ministers agreed to keep quality jobs at the heart of government policies, and by quality jobs, we mean jobs which provide social security, decent wages and full respect for labour rights.

We also agreed that it is necessary to promote education and training for young people and to create links between educational institutions and businesses to facilitate access to employment. We thus reaffirm our commitment to young people by exploring and identifying the most successful practices used in the various G20 countries to promote youth employment.

The ministers also agreed on the fact that we have an opportunity to promote green growth within the

framework of sustainable development as a potential generator for quality jobs, as recommended by the ILO. In the same vein, we have recognized the importance of social protection floors at the national level. Along with all these measures, we need to undertake structural reforms, such as labour reforms, with a view to creating quality jobs without affecting workers’ rights.

Under the Mexican presidency of the G20, it has consistently been crucial to hear the opinions of employers and workers in a framework of plural and inclusive dialogue.

Our countries face the challenge of creating quality jobs, which is crucial if we are to foster growth and ensure that development can be strong, sustained and balanced and thereby overcome marginalization, inequality and exclusion. The productive sectors are key actors in the world of work and their opinions and proposals have to be taken into account. But no one stakeholder can find and implement solutions to the complex labour problems being faced throughout the world. Only if we all contribute can we make progress. Respect, social dialogue and conciliation will be crucial for this.

International bodies such as the ILO play a pivotal role in finding solutions. I wish a great deal of success to Mr Guy Ryder, Director-General-elect, in his leadership of this Organization. We trust that the joint efforts of Governments, Employers and Workers will allow his mandate to be successfully discharged.

Finally, on this the World Day against Child Labour, I would like to echo the ILO’s call to combat that scourge and renew Mexico’s commitment to the children of the world.

Original Mandarin: Mr JIANG (Worker, China)

First of all, please allow me to congratulate Mr Guy Ryder on his election as ILO Director-General. I also wish to extend my heartfelt respect and gratitude to Mr Juan Somavia. The ILO has, for a long period of time, committed itself to achieving decent work and meeting the challenges of the global financial crisis, thus acquiring international acclaim. In recent years, especially since the convening of the 100th Session of the Conference last year, we have made fresh headway in our trade union work, giving priority to the following five principal activities.

First, we have pushed for the adoption and implementation of labour laws and policies. We have actively participated in the drawing up and revision of more than ten national labour laws and regulations concerning workers’ rights and interests, including the Act on the prevention and treatment of occupational diseases, regulations for the protection of women workers, and methods for consultation and mediation in the event of labour disputes in enterprises. Over the past year 145 local laws and regulations have come into force as a result of a strong push from our organizations across China.

Second, we have stepped up our organizing drive. We have mounted organizing campaigns in economic development zones, industrial parks and areas with high concentrations of industries. They are mainly targeting migrant workers and detached workers. At present we have a total membership of 258 million.

Third, we have made every effort to promote collective bargaining in respect of wages. We have also introduced a minimum wage system, and col-

lective wage contracts now cover 1,742,000 enterprises and more than 100 million workers.

Fourth, we have worked to increase corporate transparency and extend the workers' congress system. Up until now, 2,781,000 enterprises and institutions in China have introduced the workers' congress system.

Fifth, we have implemented a worker assistance project. We try our best to provide practical help to migrant workers, detached workers and workers in desperate need. Meanwhile, we joined forces with relevant departments to crack down on malicious wage default and have offered training programmes to 2,500,000 workers, 1,245,000 of whom found employment.

At present, the global economic and political situation is going through profound and complex changes. The long-term prospects for global recovery are fraught with great instability and uncertainty. All this has brought misery to the broad masses of workers. Chinese trade unions believe that the best way to tackle these challenges is to respect labour and disperse sustainable, economic and social development. Countries should make full employment an objective in order to bridge the gap between rich and poor and to improve living conditions for workers. Governments should step up their support for small and medium-sized enterprises to speed up industrial transformation and product upgrading. Top priority should be given to the development of the real economy and more attention should be paid to the development of the domestic

services sector to generate more employment opportunities. Trade unions should settle labour disputes through consultation and negotiation.

The financial crisis, which took a heavy toll on employment, wages and the social security of workers, has brought to light flaws in the global governance structure and the financial system. The ILO should assume a larger role in global governance and promote the balanced development of the world economy. The voice of the developing countries, especially that of the workers' organizations of the Third World, should be raised in the global governance structure for the purpose of moving the international order towards greater equity and fairness. In the new situation, Chinese trade unions are ready to enhance friendly exchanges and cooperation with the ILO and to support the ILO's efforts to achieve decent work.

Peace is the common pursuit of people throughout the world; development is the key to poverty reduction. Cooperation is an important tool for safeguarding world peace and promoting common prosperity. Workers' rights are a shared goal for the trade unions around the world. Chinese trade unions will, as always, stand by the side of the working people around the world, hold high the banner of peace, development, cooperation and workers' rights, and continue to enhance dialogue and South-South cooperation to build a harmonious world of peace and prosperity.

(The Conference adjourned at 11.20 a.m.)

Fifteenth sitting

Tuesday, 12 June 2012, 12.15 p.m.

President: Mr Alburquerque de Castro

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

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT

We will now move on to the second item on the agenda, the programme and budget and other questions.

We will begin with the examination of the report of the Finance Committee of Government Representatives, contained in *Provisional Record* No. 13.

I now call on Mr Papadatos, Government delegate of Greece and Chairperson and Reporter of the Committee, to present the report.

Mr PAPADATOS (Government, Greece; Chairperson and Reporter of the Finance Committee of Government Representatives)

I have the honour to submit to the Conference the report of the Finance Committee of Government Representatives. This report is published in *Provisional Record* No. 13 and contains the recommendations of the Committee on the matters it considered.

The three resolutions proposed by the Committee for adoption by the Conference appear at the end of the report.

The main item of business for the Finance Committee was the Financial report and audited consolidated financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2011 and the report of the External Auditor thereon.

The Committee was informed that the External Auditor had given an unqualified audit opinion and had provided observations with respect to the progress made by the ILO with the implementation of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards implementation (IPSAS), including, of course, the adoption of four new standards in 2011; information technology (IT); control environment at the ILO; human resources succession planning; and progress made on the implementation of prior years' recommendations.

The Committee had no hesitation in proposing that the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2011 in the report of the External Auditor thereon be adopted, in accordance with article 29 of the Financial Regulations.

The Committee also considered the proposal concerning the scale of assessment of contributions to the ILO regular budget for 2013 and recommends that the ILO scale of assessments for 2013 based on

the United Nations scale be adopted by the Conference.

The Committee had before it proposals concerning the composition of the ILO Administrative Tribunal. It unanimously accepted recommendations from the Governing Body that the Conference convey its deep appreciation to Ms Gaudron for the services she has rendered as judge and as President of the Tribunal; express regret at the resignation of Ms d'Auvergne; renew the appointments of Mr Ba (Senegal), Mr Barbagallo (Italy) and Ms Hansen (Canada) for a term of three years; and appoint Hon. Michael Francis Moore (Australia) and Hon. Sir Hugh Anthony Rawlins (St Kitts and Nevis) for a term of three years.

In concluding, I would like to express my thanks to the members of the Committee and also to the members of the Secretariat, all of whom helped me greatly in my task as Chairperson.

I commend our report to you for approval.

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT

As there are no further speakers, we will now proceed to the approval of the Committee's Report.

If there are no objections, may I take it that the Conference approves the report of the Finance Committee of Government Representatives, paragraphs 1–15, and its Appendices I and II?

(The report – paragraphs 1–15 and Appendices I and II – is approved.)

RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS OF CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE BUDGET FOR 2013: ADOPTION

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT

We now move on to the adoption of the three resolutions submitted by the Committee, beginning with the resolution concerning the scale of assessments of contributions to the budget for 2013. If there are no objections, may I take it that the Conference adopts this resolution?

(The resolution is adopted.)

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

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT

The second resolution is the resolution concerning the composition of the Administrative Tribunal of the International Labour Organization. If there are

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

(The resolution is adopted.)

**RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE FINANCIAL REPORT
AND AUDITED CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2011: ADOPTION**

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT

The third and last resolution is the resolution concerning the financial report and audited consolidated financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2011. If there are no objections, may I take it that the Conference adopts this resolution?

(The resolution is adopted.)

That brings us to the end of our examination of the report of the Finance Committee of Government Representatives. I would like to thank the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson and all the members of the Committee for their outstanding work. We would also like to thank all the staff of the Office who contributed to the smooth running of the Committee.

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

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT

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

Mr MUNYES (*Minister for Labour, Kenya*)

May I take this opportunity to congratulate the President and his Vice-Presidents on their elections to preside over this 101st Session of the International Labour Conference. Kenya wishes to thank the Director-General for a comprehensive and insightful Report, and congratulate him for his spectacular service to the ILO, which leaves a legacy of global acceptance of decent work. This remains highly relevant as we move into the future and every effort should be made to maintain decent work as part of a wider multilateral agenda.

Kenya wishes to congratulate Mr Guy Ryder on his election as Director-General and assure him of our total support and cooperation. We request him to keep an eye on youth employment and the extension of social protection to workers in the informal economy, which are priorities for Africa.

The detailed assessment of the results achieved for each of the 19 outcomes of the ILO results framework is encouraging, particularly when viewed against the backdrop of the global financial crisis. However, more effort is required in respect of productive employment, income opportunities, social protection, labour administration and inspection, underpinned by social dialogue.

The ILO must continue to explore new ways of dealing with the youth unemployment crisis if global and national stability is to be sustained. We welcome the outcomes on youth employment, which should be practical and implementable. The period under review was difficult for the world of work, with the global crisis setting countries back economically and socially. This has brought to the forefront the imperative for a better balance between economic growth and social progress. With

youth unemployment in Kenya estimated at 60 per cent, the potential for socio-political unrest, as witnessed in the Arab Spring, is imminent. Kenya therefore requests the ILO's technical support to conduct a review of our national youth employment policies and programmes to better achieve the requisite job creation.

Looking at the biennium summary of results by indicator and region in table 1 on page 15 of the Report, we note with encouragement the achievements made, particularly in Africa. However, the imbalance between the employment objectives and the other three strategic objectives needs to be addressed. We call for the ILO to increase its efforts to build capacity to achieve integrated and balanced outcomes in all its strategic objectives. Kenya calls for stronger and closer cooperation between the International Training Centre in Turin and other regional and national institutions to achieve cost-effective results.

The 16 selected studies on the ILO in action, found in the last section (Part 5) of the executive overview of the Report, illustrate the fact that tangible change and broader decent work opportunities are real options. Recognition of the need to establish guaranteed minimum levels of social security through national social protection floors is vital for inclusive development. Kenya would like to thank the ILO for undertaking a rapid assessment of its social protection initiatives, which laid the basis for the national social protection policy that was recently approved by Cabinet. We are also in the process of transforming the National Social Security Fund from a provident fund to a pension scheme and extending social security to the informal workforce. We therefore require ILO technical support to implement the social protection floor for Kenya.

Further, Kenya has ensured that domestic workers enjoy the same basic labour rights as other workers. The Government is in the process of proposing guidelines for the implementation of national labour laws in relation to domestic workers to determine approved terms and conditions of employment, as groundwork towards the ratification of the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189).

Kenya supports the ILO's work in seeking a lasting solution to the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories and encourages programmes geared towards the achievement of everlasting peace in the region.

Finally, Kenya wishes to take this opportunity to congratulate the new Republic of South Sudan on its entry into the ILO as the 184th member State. We wish it well and look forward to continued partnership in enhancing social justice in our region and globally.

Mr MAVRIKOS (*Representative, World Federation of Trade Unions*)

This year, the annual session of the International Labour Conference is again taking place against the backdrop of a deep crisis within the capitalist system. It is a crisis that affects all sectors and all levels. It touches the economy, politics, cultural life and the environment.

The European Union is in deep crisis: Greece, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Ireland, Belgium, etc. The crisis is now reaching the very core of Europe: it is knocking at the doors of France, and even sending worrying signals to Germany.

The deep crisis, affecting almost all countries in the European Union, dangerously intensifies competition among countries. Germany is trying to build its own alliances with Russia and others. France is trying to strengthen its own alliances as well.

The competition among these capitalist States, which all want to control new markets and establish new borders, and which compete for natural gas, oil and energy pipelines, poses serious dangers for peace and the world's population.

In Libya, 120,000 people died because of struggles to control these natural resources. In the Syrian Arab Republic, the emirs, kings and sultans of the Persian Gulf, alongside the Turkish Government, are providing weapons for Syrians to kill each other. Imperialists are pushing South Sudan to make new demands day after day. In Somalia, Nigeria and the Falkland Islands, the situation is also worrying.

The slanders of the United States and the European Union against the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela or Cuba, and the situation in Pakistan and Afghanistan, all serve to complete the picture of imperialist interventions.

We, as workers, as a trade union movement founded on the working class, as the World Federation of Trade Unions, have a duty to expose the plots of the exploiters and to edify the workers of the world, inspiring them with a militant spirit of struggle, of internationalism, of constant fight against imperialist wars.

The World Federation of Trade Unions and its members and friends around the world have engaged in significant struggles over the last year. At the heart of these is the struggle against unemployment. Unemployment is a social phenomenon. It is a product of capitalism. Unemployment affects everyone, but especially women and young people. The figures show that 75 million young people are looking for a job today.

The ILO can easily express wishes. It can talk in generalities and make vague promises. For too long now, we have been listening to grand words about dignity, equality and democratic rights. But today, there are more than 200 young Palestinians imprisoned in Israeli gaols. What has the ILO done for them? For their decent life, for their future?

In Central America, around 4,000 children are currently involved with gangs trafficking drugs. What has the ILO done to intervene? Some 1,500 children will die today because they have no access to water and because of water-borne diseases. What has the ILO done for them?

In Greece, in the last two years, more than 2,350 poor people, pensioners and unemployed people have committed suicide. What did the ILO do to denounce the Greek Government? Today, 52 per cent of those unemployed in Greece and 50.5 per cent of those unemployed in Spain are young people. The World Federation of Trade Unions sent a letter to the ILO asking it to intervene against dismissals of young people. It did nothing.

Thousands of young people are suffering from HIV/AIDS and cannot obtain medication. Life expectancy in Botswana has dropped by 20 years, in Swaziland by 16 years and in Lesotho and Zambia by 13 years over the last decade. In Kazakhstan, strikers and trade unionists are being murdered. In Malaysia, trade unionists are being dismissed. In Colombia, trade unionists are murdered on a daily basis, yet the ILO removed the Government of Co-

lombia from the list of the Committee on the Application of Standards. In the mines of Chile and Peru, workers are dying every day. What measures has the ILO taken?

Workers around the world are under attack. For example, in Greece, the workers in Helleniki Hlivourgia who have been on strike for more than 200 days. Workers at Unilever, in France, have been on strike for more than 600 days.

For the World Federation of Trade Unions, equality and social justice are not empty words. This is why, on 3 October 2012, we announced an international day of action based on the slogan, "Food, clean water, books, medicine, housing for each and every worker". We chose this theme because we really believe that, in the twenty-first century, it is a crime to see workers dying of hunger and thirst, to see people living on the streets, to see millions of pupils with no school books, to see the sick with no access to medicine. We believe it is a crime that multinationals and monopolies are plundering countries' resources, while the people are left to suffer.

The world is unfair, the world is undemocratic, and the World Federation of Trade Unions will continue to struggle until we have transformed it into a world where man is not exploited by his fellow man.

Ms TZOTZE-LANARA (*Worker, Greece*)

According to the ILO Report on the High-level Mission to Greece last year, the crisis in Greece is not an exclusive Greek problem, but derives from the global financial crisis. Yet in a recent interview, IMF Managing Director, Christine Lagarde, expressed sympathy for children in Niger but not for Greek children, blaming their parents who do not pay taxes. Adding insult to "Troika" injury, impoverished Greek families are now portrayed as serial tax-evaders.

Nevertheless, Greek workers and pensioners in 2011 paid 55 per cent of all taxes – 3 per cent more than in 2008. Businesses contributed only 28.6 per cent – 3 per cent less than in 2008. Greeks work the longest hours among OECD countries after the Republic of Korea. The most drastic budget deficit reduction in Europe in the last 30 years was achieved thanks to the impoverishment of Greeks.

The Greek crisis is undoubtedly rooted in economic domestic flaws. It blew, however, out of all proportions, due to the self-defeating bid to save European banks from their own trillions' worth of reckless lending spree.

In this process, Greece is being exponentially pushed to social and economic collapse.

In two-and-a-half years of implementation, the fiscal and structural adjustment imposed by the "Troika" on Greece has failed on all accounts. All key economic indicators have gone downhill. The cumulative contraction of the economy since 2008 exceeds 20 per cent, and could attain war-time levels of 25 to 30 per cent. How can such outcomes help competitiveness and debt sustainability?

As austerity is followed by recession, more austerity, new taxes and deeper recession; a vicious circle strangles growth and job creation. Unemployment is at 22 per cent, youth unemployment at 52 per cent, pushing our youth to immigrate. The political and social crisis threatens to evolve into a humanitarian crisis. Nearly 30 per cent of the population has rapidly shifted below the poverty line. More than a quarter of a million people rely on re-

lief work for a daily meal. Criminality, HIV cases, violence – particularly against migrants – are all on the increase. The health system is collapsing and, for example, cancer patients cannot get life-saving drugs. Malnutrition amongst our school children is increasing and a wave of desperation and suicides is hitting the country.

Along with economic decimation, workers in Greece are suffering grave institutional disempowerment. Successive legislation, imposed by the “Troika” on compliant Greek politicians, is permanently and irreversibly dismantling core labour rights, uprooting labour institutions and demolishing the social State – depriving workers of vital institutional capabilities to defend themselves when most needed.

Free collective bargaining has been impeded, collective agreements abolished and trade unions intimidated. Social dialogue is recklessly destroyed, to be replaced by authoritarian unilateralism that renders social partners redundant.

The minimum wage was slashed by 22 per cent across the board – and by 32 per cent for young workers – directly violating the National Collective Agreement and Convention No. 98, and trampling upon an explicit agreement by the social partners to the contrary. Only this singlehandedly cut wages by 40 per cent.

The ratification of Conventions is not a matter to be taken lightly. If the Government of Greece violates ILO Conventions, serious questions arise as regards the IMF and the European Union, who by direct and indirect conditionalities demand even harsher adjustments, which violate core ILO Standards and principles. In June 2011, here at this Conference, we welcomed the Report of the Committee of Experts and the conclusions on Greece at the Committee on the Application of Standards.

In September 2011 we were encouraged in Greece by the lucid Report on the high-level mission to Greece, which highlighted the “spillover effect” that such unprecedented changes could have on industrial relations to the detriment of social peace and society at large.

This year, June 2012, we are distressed to see the Greek case blocked from discussion by Employer manoeuvres that paralyzed the crucial work of the Committee on the Application of Standards. We are equally dismayed to see in the twenty-first century, the right to strike contested and the heart of the ILO supervisory machinery challenged.

The regrettable turn of events at this Conference points backwards – away from social partnership, away from the post-war consensus when unions had a legitimate role.

The Director-General’s Report analyses the hazards ahead and sets out the way forward to “a new era of social justice” through social dialogue, growth and thoughtful governance. This is the way we should take: forward.

To conclude, we wish to thank Mr Somavia for this exceptional Report and his outstanding service to the ILO. We congratulate Mr Ryder on his election that gives hope for the future of this House.

Original Russian: Ms ABDYKALIKOVA (Government, Kazakhstan)

At the outset, allow me to congratulate Mr Juan Somavia for his efforts in developing the concept of decent work. We have enjoyed familiarizing ourselves with the Report, which sets out the achieve-

ments of the multilateral work carried out by the ILO over the last five years, and allows us to see the results of Kazakhstan’s cooperation with the ILO.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr Guy Ryder on his election to the post of Director-General of the ILO. We know he has immense experience of working through social dialogue and we would also like to thank the ILO for participating, in May this year, in the session of the Astana Economic Forum that focused on global trends in employment and decent work.

Allow me to now discuss the key items on the agenda and present you with a brief survey of where we stand.

To attain social equality, Kazakhstan is implementing a social strategy and providing the necessary resources to ensure people’s welfare and development, eradicate poverty and inequality and create conditions within which true social solidarity can flourish.

As shown by developed countries, relatively high levels of social spending are not only financially admissible, but are also effective in terms of an overall socio-economic strategy.

Indeed, over the past ten years, Kazakhstan’s expenditure on social security and social assistance has increased sevenfold. At present, around 12 per cent of Kazakhstan’s GDP is earmarked for social issues, out of which 4.5 per cent is devoted to social programmes. It has to be said that, at present, the rate at which the state budget is being increased to cover social needs is not equivalent to the GDP growth rate.

Yet increasing state expenditure to resolve social issues is not an end in itself. It should be carried out effectively by stimulating productive labour in the formal sector of the economy, and preventing social dependence, as well as by further developing the social protection system.

We are planning to improve the benefits system by following the principles of economic acceptability. As well as increasing financial sustainability and enhancing the effectiveness of funded pension schemes, we are preparing to develop the three-tier pension system.

The working population is inadequately covered by the compulsory social insurance system, as it has not been in place for a long period of time. Accordingly, we aim to ensure that workers’ needs are covered by a basic level of social security, and that adequate compensation is provided for social risks based on the compulsory level of social security and insurance. We also aim to ensure that the system covers the widest spectrum possible of the population, in particular those who are self-employed.

To provide social support we are developing and implementing minimum social standards, which have been well-researched. These take account of the needs of the population and aim to provide social protection and social services, in accordance with the financial capacities of the State. Together with the ILO, we have already begun work on a new method by which to define the minimum subsistence wage.

To continue improving the living standards of the population and providing them with social stability, we need to step up our efforts for social modernization.

As was discussed in the Astana Economic Forum, our employment policy is first and foremost focused on practical measures. The new employment pro-

gramme adopted in Kazakhstan last year places the development of human resources to implement innovative industrial development programmes on a par with involving citizens in productive employment.

New approaches and mechanisms for employment assistance are being developed: providing training and assistance in finding employment (for young people in particular); creating social jobs; encouraging the development of entrepreneurship in rural areas; providing microloans. Particular attention is being focused on ensuring labour mobility. State support is being provided for the unemployed, the vulnerable and the self-employed. Young people living in rural areas will be prioritized in terms of opportunities.

To help implement this programme, this year the State set aside around 500 million tenge and next year it is planning to allocate about 1 billion tenge.

It is becoming increasingly important not only to provide any kind of work, but also to provide work that will ensure economic growth and that working hours are not excessive, as well as create decent labour conditions and reward workers. That is why the Government of Kazakhstan is strictly abiding by

the principles of the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, adopted at the 86th Session of the ILO.

Kazakhstan has ratified all of the eight core Conventions of the ILO.

This year Kazakhstan ratified the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), and the Asbestos Convention, 1986 (No. 162).

Kazakhstan is working on ratification of the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156); the Protection of Wages Convention, 1949 (No. 95); and the Minimum Wage-Fixing Machinery Convention, 1928 (No. 26).

ILO labour standards are being implemented through the Decent Work Agenda.

A general agreement for the period 2012 to 2014 has been concluded between the Government and the national workers' and employers' confederations.

We are sure that the vision of the ILO, and the instruments it provides, will ensure that we attain results and positive changes in the areas of work and employment.

(The Conference adjourned at 12.50 p.m.)

Sixteenth sitting

Tuesday, 12 June 2012, 2.30 p.m.

President: Mr Atwoli

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

The PRESIDENT

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

Original Portuguese: Mr BRIZOLA NETO (Government, Brazil)

On behalf of the Brazilian Government, I would first like to express our deep gratitude to the Director-General, Mr Juan Somavia, for the excellent work he has done leading the International Labour Organization. Thanks to his efforts, the Organization has consolidated the paradigm of decent work as the lynchpin of economic policies and development strategies.

I would also like to welcome Mr Guy Ryder, the Director-General-elect. I recall him saying in his first speech after being elected that the ILO is an organization for social justice and that millions of people need it who are not even aware of its existence. Brazil shares the view that the international community must respond to these millions of people through the ILO. For that reason we will continue to work on the basis of cooperation and solidarity, doing in our country what we propose in international forums.

Within two months we will be holding the First National Conference on Employment and Decent Work, the most comprehensive and inclusive social dialogue initiative in our history. It will be the culmination of long and extensive discussions between governments, workers and employers on fundamental issues affecting the world of work.

We all know that my country is one of the strongest advocates of a Recommendation on the social protection floor. For us, it is the first major step towards making social security truly universal. Whether as the initial elements of social security where none yet exists or as an extension of existing mechanisms, social protection must be regarded as an instrument of dignity and respect for human beings.

This is the issue before us.

We are living in an era defined by the globalization of movements of goods and capital, which everybody wants to be free and within secure and ethical parameters. On this subject there is no lack of strong statements and even international regula-

tions, such as those laid down by the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Sadly, the international community has not attached the same importance to the debate on something that forms an integral part of the worldwide movements of accumulated capital and goods.

I am talking about the work of human hands, which is the source of all wealth and without which there would be no capital and no goods.

When we speak of work, we do not hear any harsh condemnation of dumping, of predatory exploitation, of freedom of movement, which is applied fully to money but not to human beings.

The spectre of unemployment in the developed world is something that fills all of us who uphold the principle of human equality with sadness and concern. We know how hard this is because we experience the problems of underdevelopment, we experience for decades at a time the tragedy of unemployment and underemployment and, even more cruelly, we see how the effects of recession and economic orthodoxy are destroying the dreams and prospects of young people.

The Government of my country has given priority to employment and to training for the young in order to meet the challenges of a modern economy. Even though these initiatives are on a large scale, it cannot tackle a crisis which is global in dimension and whose financial impact and the changes it has produced are affecting developing countries which, through their efforts and sacrifices, had become the main drivers of this economy.

This is what our President, Ms Dilma Rousseff, described as a financial tsunami, its trail of destruction including the loss of 50 million jobs and the undermining of rights and guarantees for workers.

My country, by rejecting prescribed remedies of economic retrenchment and pressure on the workers, managed to extricate itself from the chaos of the crisis and create no less than 9 million jobs from 2008 onwards. But we are not immune to the damaging effects of the global situation: we are losing competitiveness owing to the exchange rate appreciation and this also endangers our industry. Foreign markets and consumption close down and we are powerless to respond.

In a week from now we will be at Rio +20, striving for sustainable development. But what sustainable development can there be if we do not place at the heart of it the integration and dignity of millions of human beings whose lives depend on their physical and intellectual work?

Brazil will be hosting this global gathering, soon to be followed by events on which the eyes of the world will be fixed: the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympics. Our country will be measured according to the progress it has made in urban development, income generation, the creation of opportunities and improvements in the quality of life of almost 200 million Brazilian citizens.

But we will also be judged by what we do and say within the international community. We do not have any lessons to share. But we have plenty of solidarity to offer to the poor who aspire to an affirmation of their national identity, as we are doing in South-South and triangular cooperation partnerships with other Latin American, African and Asian countries.

If we want to build a better world, we know that the future depends on recognizing the value of work and of the people doing it. If work is to have dignity, we have to honour the dignity of the worker. There can be no dignity for the world if there is none for the men and women living in it.

Original French: Ms CÂMPEANU (Minister of Labour, Family and Social Protection, Romania)

May I start by expressing my appreciation for the Report that we received from the Director-General. This opens up possibilities of evaluation of what has happened over the last two years and it gives us a strong basis to face future challenges. It talks about the need for us to find efficient ways to mitigate the effects of the global crisis.

The coming years are going to be of particular importance for the Organization's constituents. We have to make sure that effective responses to major global challenges are the result of tripartism and international cooperation.

Given that the Decent Work Agenda and its four objectives constitutes one of the Organization's priorities, my Government supports the idea that the recovery from the global crisis must be based on decent work, which offers an opportunity to shake off poverty and reduce inequalities. This has to be part of the global agenda for social and environmental sustainable development. Any discrimination against migrant workers, the elderly or unskilled, women and graduates is of great concern for us.

Romania supported the adoption of the Global Jobs Pact in 2009. This means that employment and social protection has to be put at the core of our monetary and fiscal policies in the short term to stimulate the real economy and guarantee established social rights.

We have always stated that the implementation of this Pact should take account of the diversity of national situations, needs and resources and enable synergy and interaction to consolidate positive effects globally.

As you know, over the past three years, the last government took various tough social measures which have affected a number of population groups. My Government's programme aims to redress the imbalances that were created in the name of austerity as soon as possible. A constant priority in the employment, family and social protection sector continues to be the promotion of dialogue and social harmony.

We want to rebuild and consolidate permanent and transparent social dialogue. We want to increase employment rates among disadvantaged groups and the long-term unemployed, but particu-

larly among young people through the promotion of a priority programme with the social partners. This programme comprises a review of legislation on social dialogue, the Labour Code and legislation on wages in the budgetary sector, and the revision of the law on apprenticeships and day labourers.

The national employment plan will be finalized once we have found the financial resources needed for the implementation of active measures. Economic growth is intended to, firstly, ensure a good work market performance and, secondly, reduce the unemployment rate.

If we manage to maintain a balanced budget, wages in the public sector should return to their June 2010 levels. The Government plans to monitor the gross minimum wage over the period 2012–16, and foster conditions for a social agreement among the trade unions and employers' organizations.

Another priority is to improve European fund absorption rates and the quality of occupational safety and health. In the area of social assistance, some of our objectives include reviewing the legislative framework and the subsequent elaboration of new legislation, and the development of social services for childcare and family dependants. We are also considering the development of a domestic worker system and social economy legislation.

We need to adapt to the European Union and global competition requirements. The International Labour Organization needs to step up its efforts to promote its standards and values, particularly in this period of crisis. The Romanian Government has always shared the objectives of the International Labour Organization on fair globalization, the elimination of poverty, gender equality, the respect for international labour standards and more constructive social dialogue.

Original Spanish: Mr FUNTANET MANGE (Employer, Mexico)

I congratulate the President on his election to guide this session of the Conference. We would also like to congratulate Mr Guy Ryder on his appointment as Director-General of the ILO. We are convinced that his stewardship will be of great benefit to the Organization. We also recognize the achievements of his predecessor, Mr Juan Somavia. Without doubt, the presence of Guy Ryder will bring balance to the work of this Organization, particularly in the Bureau for Employers' Activities and in the area of technical assistance, which is a core part of the work done by the ILO that benefits all constituents.

We respectfully salute the Mexican Minister of Labour and Social Provision, Ms Rosalinda Velez. We also salute, with respect and appreciation, the delegates of our fellow member States of the ILO. On behalf of the employers of Mexico, whom I have the honour to represent at this 101st Session of the International Labour Conference, let us build a future with decent work.

The youth employment crisis is a pending issue that concerns the nations represented here. It is a subject of critical importance for the development of societies. Our permanent representative to the ILO, Mr Jorge de Regil, was Employer Vice-Chairperson on the Committee on Youth in June 1986. Since then, Mexico has been talking about the need to generate more high-quality jobs for young people, with real opportunities for professional development. The topic has also been a priority at meetings of the G20, and I am certain that it will

continue to be so at the meeting to be hosted by Mexico later this month.

For Mexican employers, training, skills enhancement and education for young people are priorities, because it is young people who will develop the economy, its enterprises and, as a result, society at large. As the recently issued report *Global employment trends for youth 2012* indicates, 12.6 per cent of the world's young people are unemployed. There are 75 million young people with the legitimate right and need to access labour market opportunities, so as to avoid this potential labour force joining the informal economy or, even worse, turning to crime.

In this respect, modernizing labour systems in Mexico and around the world through public policies that promote economic and social development cannot be put off any longer. One of the most important factors is high-quality education, and in particular the link between regional production needs and the labour force supply emerging from universities and colleges.

In Mexico, we are concerned about education being interrupted because of the demands of work and the resistance shown by some teachers to undergo assessment and continuous training, which affects the quality of education and consequently the competitiveness of Mexicans.

In addition to quality of education, another key factor in giving young people access to better opportunities is to promote improvements that encourage greater flexibility for job creation, on the one hand, and respect for rights and seeking a better standard of living, on the other. We as Mexican entrepreneurs are conscious that it is vital to undertake labour reforms to modernize the law in this regard, as the current legal framework was developed in 1931 and has not been revised since 1970. This shows that our federal labour law does not match the current reality of the globalized world. Fortunately, in Mexico's current electoral process, the majority of presidential candidates agree with the private sector on the need for comprehensive labour reforms.

At the same time, it is no less important for our country to undertake far-reaching budgetary reforms to facilitate fixing a social protection floor, and tax reforms to allow enterprises to operate and develop.

Social protection schemes, either with contributions or with State funding, are a safeguard for workers and society in general. This protection must be based on ability to pay and balanced contributions, both for workers and for employers, and not on assistance programmes using taxation revenue, as an effective social development policy invariably stems from a genuine policy for regional economic development.

Structural reforms are fundamental in emerging countries such as Mexico, as they represent a vital step towards the economic growth needed for the creation of more and better jobs. An enormous challenge among the member States of the ILO is to seek mechanisms that can reverse the growth of the informal economy. To do this, we need to develop stimuli so that medium-sized enterprises can have access to innovations, technological developments and knowledge transfer, which, without doubt, will enhance their development, thereby guaranteeing high-quality jobs and a better and fairer distribution of wealth.

On behalf of the Mexican Confederation of Chambers of Industry (CONCAMIN), which I have the privilege of leading, and on behalf of the employers of my country, please accept our recognition and our assurance that we will work together towards a future with decent work in the current economic and social climate. It is an honour for our Confederation to belong to the ILO, which is a fundamental pillar in achieving better standards of living for populations and charting better global courses.

Original Finnish: Mr IHALAINEN (Minister of Labour, Ministry of Employment and the Economy, Finland)

This year's session of the Conference coincides with a significant turning point. The election of a new Director-General is an important decision for the Organization.

I should like to start by extending my warmest thanks to the outgoing Director-General, Mr Juan Somavia, for his excellent work in increasing the visibility of the ILO and promoting the Decent Work Agenda. I also congratulate the Director-General-elect, Mr Guy Ryder, and wish him all the best in taking the helm of this important United Nations organization during this severe economic crisis.

I would like to take this opportunity to explain to the Director-General-elect Finland's expectations concerning the future challenges and priorities of the ILO. For decades the ILO has been a beacon guiding the development of our labour legislation. International labour standards have, indeed, had a strong impact on the Finnish labour legislation. In addition, the ILO's tripartite model has influenced our labour market structures and collective bargaining system.

The ILO's main mission is the formulation of international labour standards. The revision of the standards has been on the agenda of many previous sessions of the International Labour Conference. The ILO must continue its work on the revision of its standards in order to offer all constituents – member States, employers, and workers – up-to-date models for developing national labour laws and also collective agreements in our changing world.

However, these Conventions should be revised in the spirit of mutual trust and careful consideration. The revision must not result in the deterioration or abolition of the Convention system. One useful method might be to adopt optional protocols to existing Conventions; this would help us to avoid any loss of the commitment to Conventions demonstrated by their ratification in cases where the Conventions are still relevant but only need minor updates.

The starting point for international labour standards is the protection of the weaker party, the worker. This must remain our starting point, especially now that various new forms of work are challenging the application of traditional labour standards. The tripartite structure of the ILO helps us to take into account the expertise of all constituents and make balanced decisions based on the different views. All constituents – governments, employers and workers – must feel that the ILO creates added value for them.

Traditionally, the ILO has assisted member States in developing social contracts between various groups. Social contracts are especially important during the financial crisis. Even during a crisis,

tough decisions must be taken on the basis of consultations with social partners and respecting their autonomy concerning their right to collective bargaining, as well as according to agreed rules. This applies both to wage development and social partners' opportunities to be consulted when developing labour legislation or contractual structures.

Youth unemployment is a global problem. The ILO should also attempt to find solutions that are applicable to the conditions of various countries. If ignored, youth unemployment could endanger social stability and the social contract and weaken the sustainability of our societies. In Finland, we are striving to guarantee our young people and our country a future through the youth guarantee model. We face a particular challenge of bringing young people who are not in vocational training or employment or registered as jobseekers with an employment office, within the sphere of active labour market policy measures.

The adoption of a Recommendation on the social protection floor is of critical importance. I hope that the new Recommendation can serve in particular the needs of developing countries, as they build their social security systems from their own starting points. As we witnessed during the previous financial crisis, societies with social security buffers recovered earlier than average.

It is important that all constituents are also committed in the future to supporting the ILO's efforts to resolve global labour market problems and to observing jointly agreed standards. Regarding the countries of the European Union, the need for various EU institutions to commit themselves to observing ILO standards is of the utmost importance.

Finally, I would like to urge the social partners to do their best to avoid in the future this year's catastrophe in the Committee on the Application of Standards.

Original Russian: Mr TIHIPKO (Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Policy, Ukraine)

Allow me, first of all, on behalf of the Ukrainian delegation, to welcome the participants to the Conference and I hope that we can conduct successful and productive work.

Ukraine is taking decisive steps in building a socially just State. The Programme for Economic Reform 2010–14 and the social initiatives that the President of the Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovich, presented in March of this year, are strategic areas for Ukraine.

The first phase of pension reform has been completed in accordance with the Programme for Economic Reform in Ukraine. The social support system for citizens is undergoing modernization and is shifting to targeted assistance and better quality social services, which will contribute to restoring social justice.

The priorities of social policy for this year for the Government of Ukraine are as follows: facilitating employment and creating new jobs; improving social standards, guarantees regarding wages, pension provision, and social assistance for vulnerable population groups; and building affordable accommodation.

The joint efforts of the Government and social partners will contribute to the effective implementation of these reforms and of our priorities.

The first day of June 2012 was the date of an important event in Ukraine with the signing of the na-

tional tripartite agreement on jobs and employment, based on the provisions of the ILO Global Jobs Pact and on the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

In implementing this agreement, we plan to achieve the following results by 2017: to increase employment in the 15–70 age group to 64.3 per cent; to increase employment rates to 68.5 per cent; to raise the level of vocational training coverage; to improve skills; to retrain 23 per cent of both employed people and the unemployed; and bring the share of workers without qualifications down from 23.9 to 16.5 per cent.

One of the issues on today's agenda is youth employment, which is a problem affecting virtually the entire world. Looking at the trends on unemployment in Ukraine, many countries would envy our situation. In 2009, this stood at 8.9 per cent according to ILO statistics. In 2011 this level fell to 7.8 per cent and this trend has been maintained in 2012.

However, the problem of youth employment remains significant. Unemployment this year stood at around 20 per cent. The high youth unemployment in Ukraine, as in other countries, is due to the fact that young people do not have sustainable comparative advantages in the labour market. In order to contribute to effective employment and job creation in Ukraine, in coordination with the social partners, a bill on employment has been submitted to Parliament, which aims to stimulate or provide incentives for employers.

The bill contains measures that encourage employers to create new jobs for the unemployed, in particular, for vulnerable categories of the population. Special attention is given to young people and to improving the professional training of the unemployed.

I wish to point out that the productivity of social dialogue in Ukraine has been improved by the implementation of a law on social dialogue, which was adopted in 2010.

The National Tripartite Socio-Economic Council has begun to work in its new independent form.

As a result of the effective cooperation between the social partners and the Government, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed on 12 June, 2012 between the Ministry of Social Policy and national trade union confederations, national employers' organizations and the International Labour Organization, in order to implement the 2012–15 decent work programme.

I wish to thank the International Labour Organization for its methodological and technical assistance to Ukraine. I look forward to our continued beneficial cooperation.

Mr MARTONO (Employer, Indonesia)

It is indeed a great honour for me to be able to stand in front of you to represent the Employers' Association of Indonesia (APINDO) delivering our short statement in the Assembly Hall.

First of all, on behalf of the Employers' Association of Indonesia, I hereby would like to congratulate Mr Guy Ryder on his election as new Director-General of the International Labour Organization, and express our gratitude to Mr Juan Somavia during his leadership of the Office.

We in the Employers' Association of Indonesia found the theme of this year's session of the Conference, "building a future with decent work", very

encouraging indeed. APINDO has placed much attention and invested much energy in the implementation of decent work through social security and efforts to create employment opportunities. For us, workers' welfare is taken as a benchmark in promoting national productivity.

APINDO supports the adoption of the regulations concerning social security, based on Law No. 24/2011 regarding the social security providers in Indonesia, although this regulation is not due to be implemented until 2014.

As a national tripartite partner, together with the trade unions and the Government, APINDO is putting forward a strategy for growth and making every effort to overcome the youth unemployment crisis in Indonesia. It is astonishing that there are now 5.3 million young people who are unemployed. We are tackling this situation through various programmes to develop and enhance their skills.

In line with that, APINDO has participated in, and seriously put priority on, education and training to reduce the number of workers who have a low level of education or are unskilled. It is also promoting quality internships and increasing the number of young entrepreneurs.

APINDO also realizes, however, that it takes adequate infrastructure and facilities to achieve this. Therefore, the national and regional boards of APINDO are working hand-in-hand with all stakeholders to accelerate economic growth through many investment projects and initiatives.

Our Chairman, Mr Sofyjan Wanandi, has urged all members of APINDO to provide support for the Government in expanding investment activities at the regional level. Our commitment is evident in the significant increase in investment, which amounted to 42.8 billion Indonesian rupiah between 2010 and 2011, most of which targeted areas other than Java island. As a result, 1.6 million new job opportunities have been created, which is four times greater than the previous year. In this year of 2012, education and training have been provided to some 1.1 million young people, in order to increase their competencies.

With regard to internships, APINDO is currently collaborating with its member companies to pursue the implementation of internship programmes for young people through the APINDO Training Centre. The purposes are to help reduce and prevent unemployment, to help develop talent and interest and to help increase the number of potential young entrepreneurs.

APINDO consistently reminds employers and its member companies to actively participate in enhancing the competence of the young generation. This includes supporting education by providing well-planned and comprehensive internship programmes and establishing learning centres. The APINDO Training Centre in Jakarta was established in 2010, and in 2012 another five will be set up at the regional level. APINDO also encourages its members to establish competence certification bodies for professionals in industrial relations management and human resource management; to provide internship facilities through cooperation with APINDO's member companies; to empower and provide support for small and medium-sized enterprises; to create more jobs and employment opportunities; and to become model companies for young entrepreneurs.

All in all, we hope that this 101st Session of the International Labour Conference will bring enlightenment, opportunities and support in creating employment opportunities and for our efforts to build a future with decent work by providing adequate social security for workers and increasing the welfare of the community.

APINDO, in collaboration with the Government, the trade unions, the ILO, and any other related parties, will not stop making every effort to create harmonious industrial relations that will lead to good productivity, prosperity for all and a conducive investment climate. And of course, APINDO will play an active role in developing our beloved country, Indonesia, towards a better future.

Mr SHERLOCK (*Minister of State for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Ireland*)

In his address to this year's International Labour Conference, outgoing Director-General, Juan Somavia, cautioned against the tendency of countries in times of global turmoil to look inwards, when what the world needs is concerted action to get out of crisis.

As a small open economy, Ireland cannot afford to look inwards and we strongly endorse the Director-General's call for global concerted action to deal with the crisis. Among the actions taken in recent years by the International Labour Conference was the adoption of the Global Jobs Pact in 2009. The Pact urges measures to retain persons in employment, to sustain enterprises and to accelerate employment creation and job retention. In the intervening two years, and following a change of government, Ireland has set about translating these commitments into concrete measures at the national level that aim to generate real jobs, sustainable incomes and ongoing contribution to economic recovery and a fair society.

Two robust policy measures, the Action Plan for Jobs and Pathways to Work underpin my Government's policy objectives. The Action Plan for Jobs focuses on maximizing the business environment for small and medium-sized enterprises, including access to financing, while Pathways to Work is focused on getting Irish people, of all ages, back to work.

In addition, a national internship programme, Job Bridge, provides youth with invaluable opportunities to build their skills in the workplace and to date, over 6,800 interns have participated in the programme.

Youth unemployment, which is a significant theme of this year's Conference, is a high priority for the Irish Government as we are one of the eight EU Member States with significant levels of youth unemployment, currently at over 30 per cent.

The objective of the Action Plan for Jobs is to create the environment where 100,000 new jobs can be created by 2016, and to have two million people at work by 2020. This is part of our aim of making Ireland the best small country in which to do business by 2016.

While job creation and retention is foremost in my Government's economic recovery strategy, we are also committed to the Decent Work Agenda which is a central tenet of the ILO. In this regard, there have been a number of legislative developments in the past year. Amongst them: my Government will very shortly bring legislative proposals which will enhance the provision of parental leave to working

parents; the Industrial Relations (Amendment) Bill, which is due to be passed into law this summer, will radically overhaul the wage-setting system in what are seen as vulnerable sectors of the economy, so as to create a robust system of protection for workers in these sectors; and the Temporary Agency Work Act was enacted in May of this year. It ensures the protection of temporary agency workers by applying the principle of equal treatment in terms of basic working and employment conditions.

As I have already said, Ireland's stated aim is to be the best small country in the world in which to do business by 2016. Putting in place a modern fully functional workplace relations system is essential to achieving this. This is why the Government has started to implement a major reform of our workplace relations services. The system must operate to the highest standards and earn the confidence of employers, employees and all who will use it, and be in place for generations to come. The Government has been encouraged by the positive reaction of the reform process from the social partners who are its major stakeholders.

There are no easy solutions to the challenges we all face, but Ireland is committed to proactive, multilateral engagement with institutions, such as the ILO and the EU, to help it overcome its current challenges. Positive news came last week from the world competitiveness rankings for 2012, which ranked Ireland first globally for the flexibility and adaptability of its workforce and first globally for the availability of its skilled labour. My Government believes that this is recognition that Ireland is maintaining an appropriate balance between flexibility and protection in our labour market regulation as we chart a course out of our current difficulties and towards growth and recovery.

Original Russian: Mr SHOKHIN (Employer, Russian Federation)

I would like to congratulate Mr Guy Ryder on his election to the post of Director-General of the ILO. I would like to wish the members of our Organization and the Conference every success.

The member States of the ILO, including Russia, have complex tasks facing them due to unstable, economic recovery and the effects of the crisis which are continuously buffeting our countries. Nevertheless, at present in Russia, there is a good opportunity to change this situation for the best. The new President of the Russian Federation has set out the key thrust of the economic and social policy on a medium-term basis. This includes the modernization and creation of no less than 25 million new highly paid jobs, increasing by 2018 the productivity of labour 1.5 times, increasing the amount of investments by no less than 25 per cent GDP and increasing the high-tech component 1.3 times.

I would like to point out that most of these tasks were set out one year ago by the Prime Minister at the time and now the President of the Russian Federation, Mr Vladimir Putin, at the 100th Session of the Conference, here in Geneva.

The main way in which to achieve these aims is undoubtedly by improving the business and investment climate in Russia. This can be achieved by the following: radical reform of the public sector, privatization of state assets in order to avoid additional public spending and reducing the burden on businesses of meeting the State's obligations; reducing costs for businesses, in particular in the area of in-

vestment, and also the financial burden involved in recruiting highly qualified staff; improving business conditions by guaranteeing their protection, protecting property rights, simplifying administrative procedures, and removing unnecessary barriers; enhancing the flexibility of the labour market and improving labour legislation; enhancing the quality of state management and further developing the formal mechanisms provided for the business community to participate in drawing up and implementing socioeconomic policies.

What risks present themselves in carrying out these aims?

Firstly, creating and modernizing jobs requires significant investment. However, the pace of investment recovery is inadequate in our countries, including in Russia, and we feel that we need universal tax incentives to increase investment activity.

The growth of investment rates is also being held back by fiscal, social and administrative burdens put on businesses. In this regard, the task to reduce payments into social insurance funds, including pension funds, is still topical. The Government of Russia has implemented a number of measures to resolve this issue. Social insurance payments have been decreased this year but, nevertheless, there is still some uncertainty regarding pension reform and we hope, together with the Government, to come up with a compromise, by the end of the year, on the pension system.

Furthermore, the modernization of the economy requires a full reform in training and existing qualifications for workers. It is very important that employers, together with the trade unions, set out professional standards and that they take part not only in drawing them up, but also in implementing them. It is also important for state and private education systems to lean on professional standards when drawing up standards for teaching and education programmes.

The establishment of a competitive market economy is necessary to resolve the problem of youth unemployment. This is a pressing issue for the ILO and for Russia too. Needless to say, it is important to have supplementary stimuli for youth employment.

The last issue that I wanted to mention is improving labour legislation. Together with the Government we are amending this legislation. These changes should strengthen the role of contractual agreements between employers and workers, develop new forms of employment and harmonize Russia's labour standards with the equivalent labour standards in the ILO and OECD.

The ILO, with its wealth of experience, can make a significant contribution in advancing the programmes being implemented in different countries, which will improve the quality of social relations both in the member States and in the global economy as a whole. The ILO should focus on measures pertaining to sustainable economic development, improving qualifications and labour legislation. It would also be useful to provide information on the effectiveness of the programmes which have been implemented in our countries.

Notwithstanding the trying economic situation in the world, we nonetheless think that contribution of the social partners in resolving these problems will be significant and will enable us to resolve the greater part of these problems.

We are now going through one of the most serious crises in history, even worse than the one that occurred in 1929. No doubt there are many reasons for the present situation but certainly a key role has been played by the financial system, whose sole objective has been an unethical lust for profit, in combination with the failure by state institutions to apply the effective controls for which they were actually established.

This crisis has resulted in millions of citizens all over the world losing their jobs because of adjustment and austerity policies – imposed by the International Monetary Fund and other organizations – which have caused many countries to weaken their labour legislation, retrench their social security systems, and undermine collective bargaining and full social dialogue.

In general terms, nothing has been done to reinforce the role of the State as a promoter of policies that foster growth, attack unemployment and reduce poverty in the world.

Most of the Latin American countries have adopted a different path, according to indications from the latest work done by ECLAC and the ILO.

In 2010 and 2011 and so far in 2012 there have been signs of growth, a drop in unemployment and a decrease in poverty. Many governments in the region have adopted active policies to promote employment and reduce poverty.

I would now like to say a few words about Uruguay. In our country we have full freedom of association within the democratic system. Workers' and employers' organizations enjoy the right to organize and have full freedom of expression.

Collective bargaining covers 100 per cent of public and private workers, who negotiate in a total of 220 groups, according to branch of activity. Workers' organizations which were hard hit under the military dictatorship between 1973 and 1985 have tripled their membership since 2005.

There is a law which regulates collective bargaining for public and private workers and a law on trade union immunity which protects the exercise of such bargaining.

Since 2005, when Dr Tabaré Vázquez, representing the *Frente Amplio*, was elected President, more than 43 labour laws have been introduced and adopted by the national Parliament.

These laws, apart from ensuring collective bargaining, have improved the rights and employment conditions of Uruguayan workers in many ways. We should stress the law establishing the eight-hour day for rural and domestic workers, securing recognition for sectors which have been neglected in the past.

At the same time, we have improved social security benefits by making changes to schemes for unemployment insurance and health insurance and also to various areas of legislation, including in relation to the family.

In our country workers' wages increased in real terms by an average 37.4 per cent between 2005 and 2012, the highest growth rate in the region.

This increase was particularly marked in low-income sectors. During the same period, the national minimum wage increased by 251 per cent and the economy grew at a rate of 6 per cent.

As a result of these policies, combined with a set of social policies focusing on social integration, Uruguay reduced the proportion of its population living below the poverty line from 38 per cent in 2005 to 13.5 per cent in 2011.

Levels of formal employment with social security coverage have improved considerably. Sustained economic growth for more than eight years, including 2008 and 2009, has been compatible with real wage increases, a drastic drop in unemployment, progress on workers' rights and an expansion of collective bargaining. Furthermore, we should stress that more extensive collective bargaining in the context of a modern labour relations process has made a substantial contribution to growth in many sectors of the economy.

It is clear that when workers are informed about and take part in the formulation of policies they are more inclined to increase company productivity and hence improve their wages and benefits. The task now is to create even more tripartite forums to promote social dialogue as a tool for achieving development with social justice.

Despite abiding by these principles and achieving historic economic growth which has benefited all Uruguayans, a complaint is pending before the Committee on the Application of Standards from the employers in our country. We consider it to be unjust and against the interests of the country and of the employers themselves since it does not correspond to our models.

We will continue to conduct the intensive dialogue that we have pursued so far in order to agree on a legal framework with all players. In the meantime, however, we will work even harder to bridge the social gap which still exists in our country, to create equality of opportunity for everyone, and to eradicate the scourge of poverty once and for all.

In conclusion, Uruguay will become, next Thursday, the first country in the world to ratify the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), which represents enormous progress for millions of workers throughout the world.

Original Arabic: Ms RIACHI ASSAKER (Government, Lebanon)

I have the pleasure, on my behalf, and on behalf of the Lebanese Government, to convey our warm congratulations to Mr Guy Ryder, the Director-General-elect; we wish him every success in making headway towards ensuring a bright future for this Organization. We also extend our thanks to the previous Director-General, Mr Juan Somavia, wishing him good health and long life. He has undoubtedly left an indelible mark on the history of the ILO.

Last year's Report of the Director-General stressed the need for the adoption of fundamental principles and rights at work, and the promotion of their ratification and application in member States, pursuant to the 1998 Declaration. Lebanon made a commitment to respect these principles, which are now at the heart of relevant Lebanese laws and regulations.

They are as follows: first, freedom of association and the recognition of the right to collective bargaining. In this context, we would like to inform you that Lebanon has ratified the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), which is now on the agenda of the Parliament's work schedule.

Second, the abolition of all forms of forced or compulsory labour; we would like to point out that in Lebanon, workers are free to choose their work in accordance with a balanced contract signed with employers, which clearly specifies the rights and obligations of each party. To this effect, the Labour Code has specified the right of each party to the contract to end it, at any time. As for combating all forms of forced labour, several texts have been adopted which include penalties imposed on any employer or public authority which practises abusive acts at work.

Third, the effective elimination of child labour; the Ministry of Labour, together with other relevant ministries, is currently collaborating, through joint committees, in which the civil society participates, so as to stimulate the campaign aimed at the elimination of child labour. Making progress in any of the labour sectors, especially in the sector of agriculture in which the majority of children are employed, requires the promotion of an approach based on small enterprises and family enterprises, to which loans at preferential rates should be especially provided to poor families. The aim is to prevent them from employing children in that sector. The Government is sparing no effort to adopt social protection schemes that support disadvantaged families, which should be accompanied by the enforcement of laws providing protection for children – for example, by providing free formal education, and reviewing the policy on wealth distribution and social benefits.

Fourth, the elimination of discrimination in employment and in occupation. This principle is anchored in all sectors, including in the public sector. Lebanon has also made major strides in combating discrimination in all its forms, on the grounds of race, language, religion, or belief.

The above principles have been integrated in the texts, but they need to be closely monitored. It is the department of labour inspection and human resources, as well as the inspectors and their assistants, who are entrusted with the task of monitoring. It is for that reason that the Ministry of Labour increased the number of inspectors and provided them with training.

The part of the Report devoted to the application of Conventions and Recommendations adopted by the International Labour Conference, has highlighted shortcomings resulting from the failure of member States to meet their obligations. Public authorities are thus called upon to formulate national initiatives so as to ensure the success of decent work, while providing an appropriate support, in accordance with available resources. In the case of Lebanon, besides formulating programmes in the short-term, in accordance with identified national priorities, the Government is adopting a comprehensive national strategy, based on indicators and precise statistics in the formulation of appropriate policies for development.

Reverting to the subject of social protection floors for social justice and a fair globalization, we note that the current context of globalization is characterized by the dissemination of new technologies; the preponderance of ideas; the exchange of goods and services; financial flows; the globalization of business; the widening impact of the mass media; and various changes which all help towards economic integration and cooperation, and in benefiting from global economic growth rates. In contrast, this

global economic integration unravelled massive challenges to a number of countries, including unequal income rates, which impact negatively on employment relationships and on the forms of protection which need to be provided.

The promotion of social dialogue and the practice of the tripartite approach among Governments, workers' and employers' organizations seem to be more adequate if we are to find comprehensive solutions; establish social cohesion and ensure the supremacy of the rule of law through the adoption of international labour standards. We need to reiterate that a just and balanced labour relationship is a means of providing all forms of legal protection to workers. It leads to adapting the implementation of objectives to decent work, bearing in mind the specific circumstances and needs of each country, and to facilitate the adoption of national policies which would largely influence the development of work programmes.

Ms KASHEFI (*State Secretary, Ministry of Employment, Sweden*)

I am very pleased to stand here today and speak before this eminent audience. It has been an intense year at the ILO for many of us, particularly those of us who have been actively involved in the campaigns of candidates for the post of the new Director-General. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Guy Ryder on his election to this important post. I would also like to thank Juan Somavia for his years of tireless service and wish him all the best for the future.

The ILO has a clear added value in guiding member States and decision-makers on best practices. The agenda of this year's International Labour Conference clearly illustrates the high ambitions of the Organization. However, the deadlock that has prevented the Committee on the Application of Standards from fulfilling its role is of great concern. It is my sincere hope that the process laid out for managing these issues will ensure that the Committee's crucial functions can be restored for next year and the years to come.

With regard to the substance of the Conference, let me first briefly refer to the Recommendation on the social protection floor, soon to be adopted. Sweden supports this Recommendation, and I am sure it will be an inspiration for those member States that have not yet implemented comprehensive social protection schemes. Social protection should be seen as an instrument to reduce poverty, inequality and social exclusion. It also functions as an automatic stabilizer in times of crisis.

This leads me to the challenge of youth unemployment, an issue of top priority for all of us. According to ILO figures, 75 million persons between the ages of 15 and 24 were out of work in 2010. Furthermore, an estimated 152 million young were working poor. The figures are alarming, are they not?

As the report entitled *The youth employment crisis: Time for action* points out, "to have four out of every ten young people unemployed is a social and economic catastrophe". I could not agree more.

Long-term youth unemployment might have devastating effects on future life prospects and job opportunities for young people. The description of youth unemployment should, however, be nuanced. We should not forget that, on average, young people have much shorter unemployment spells than oth-

ers. In Sweden, we know that young people often combine work and studies. We have an unemployment rate of 23 per cent, but almost half of these unemployed young people are full-time students.

As underlined in the report, there is no quick fix. I concur with the idea that a significant reduction in youth unemployment is not feasible without achieving a high rate of economic growth and an increase in overall employment levels. A combination of demand and supply-side measures are needed.

Incentives to stimulate economic growth, job creation, entrepreneurship and training are all important ingredients. Short-term measures to increase demand and long-term measures to invest in education and skills should work in parallel.

From a general point of view, it is important to make work pay, and to make it easy for employers to employ. Furthermore, job placement activities are central ingredients. The social partners also play an important role in finding a balance between flexibility and security in employment arrangements for all.

On the other hand, young people must not be regarded as a homogenous group because that might lead us to the wrong measures. It is important to target those groups that have difficulty finding employment. As referred to in the report, the youth age group is composed of different individuals with different characteristics and different needs. Differentiated responses have to be designed to meet these groups at an individual level.

Key challenges lie with those young who are stuck in long-term unemployment and have a low level of education. For example, in Sweden, one way to stimulate labour demand for young people is to reduce social security contributions for companies hiring them. Other possibilities are economic support to start businesses.

As indicated initially, I believe that the ILO has great potential to take the lead in mobilizing the international community in the struggle to combat global youth unemployment, and I think it must do so with all available means. The ILO can, and should, work as an advocate, providing research, knowledge and guidance to member States. Furthermore, the ILO should promote employment and decent work within the multilateral context, in co-operation with the international financial institutions. It is, however, a challenge for the ILO to be relevant to all member States.

But that is not enough. In the end, it is all up to us, the member States, to learn from each other and to find solutions and develop and implement initiatives on employment, job creation, education and skills.

Original French: Mr SCHNEIDER-AMMANN (Federal Councillor, Head of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Switzerland)

Youth employment is a universal and major challenge. The figures are alarming: 75 million young people in the world do not have a job, and 309 million young people earn less than US\$2 a day. The youth unemployment rate has stayed roughly the same as it was at the worst point in the crisis in 2009 and it is expected that this rate will remain high until 2016 at least.

These young people can expect temporary jobs, part-time jobs, or occasional and informal jobs. In other words, the outlook is anything but bright for young people when it comes to their professional and personal futures. Young people will make tomorrow's world but they are losing confidence in

social and economic progress. It is a priority of national and international policies to restore their confidence firstly by opting for macroeconomic policies geared towards stability. Monetary or fiscal policy in particular enables us to adopt measures to contain the crisis and foster growth and employment. These measures should aim to reduce long-term unemployment among young people and improve their employability from the start of their professional lives.

Next, there is a need for investment in basic education and training. The education and training system should make it possible to acquire knowledge of the kind that is in demand on the labour market. In Switzerland, basic education lasts, on average, 11 years. It provides the knowledge needed to proceed to the secondary level of education, and it opens the door to vocational training or higher education. But training is not an end in itself. It should make it easier to find high-quality, productive and sustainable jobs. High-quality vocational training, in Switzerland, takes place in trade schools but also in enterprises. That is what we call the dual-track training approach. It makes a major contribution to ensuring that young people find a way onto the job market and it leads to a high rate of active population coupled with low unemployment.

As a former entrepreneur, I want to stress that rapid integration of young people into the labour market is not possible unless enterprises make an active contribution. Indeed, this is one of the essential tasks of professional associations and of the social partners, who must ensure that there is a sufficient supply of apprenticeships and places in training programmes. It is also important to ensure, over time, that the system is viable, and that we have curricula and training places which cover new job types. I am also convinced that this is an investment which pays for itself and is important for society and young people, but also useful to the enterprises that provide training.

Thirdly, there is a need for investment in a social protection system which excludes no one. The social protection system should encourage rapid reintegration into the workforce. Switzerland has progressively developed a social protection net which leaves no one behind. Our unemployment insurance scheme is a central part of that system since it is intended to move job-seekers back into employment rapidly and sustainably by means of support and counselling services and active qualification and job placement measures. Our unemployment insurance scheme improves the likelihood that job-seekers will find a job. Young people, particularly those with no work experience, benefit greatly from the quality of these services.

Finally, there is a need for investment in social dialogue. In Switzerland, we have used social dialogue and peace in the workplace for 75 years. Social dialogue is the key which opens the door to integration and to social and economic stability. It allows us to keep our thumb on the pulse of the economy as we implement coherent social and economic policies. For example, our growth and training policies are open to all: young people, adults and older workers. They enable them to find productive jobs in the formal sector. The active role played by the social partners means that we have a labour market which is relatively less regulated by the State. Social dialogue makes it possible to pro-

vide adequate social protection via conventions and agreements between the social partners.

In Geneva, an enterprise was recently closed and its jobs were sent elsewhere. In this situation too, social partnerships should do their part. I was impressed by the quality of the proposals made just this morning by the social partners to save as many

jobs as possible in Geneva. For me it is a priority to act with the Canton and the relevant social partners. My desire is to support projects which make it possible to keep the maximum number of jobs and the maximum amount of research here in Switzerland.

(The Conference adjourned at 3.50 p.m.)

Seventeenth sitting

Tuesday, 12 June 2012, 5.40 p.m.

President: Mr Sukayri

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

The PRESIDENT

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

Mr MCLEOD (*Government, Trinidad and Tobago*)

It gives me very great pleasure to join in congratulating the President on his election and to bring greetings from all of the people in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. I feel particularly fortunate and privileged to be addressing this assembly at this time, when such an instructive panel has gone before me.

Let me say from the outset that there can be little doubt that the world owes a debt of gratitude to Director-General Somavia for his sterling efforts in seeking to ensure that workers everywhere engage in work which, in addition to providing a sustainable livelihood, also promotes human dignity. Without a doubt, Juan Somavia's decent work concept encapsulates all that the ILO has stood for since its inception.

To you, Excellency, we express our profound appreciation and extend every good wish for a happy, peaceful and rewarding retirement.

As we look to the future, I am heartened by the level of interest demonstrated in the keenly contested elections for the post of Director-General. In extending congratulations to Mr Ryder, I take this opportunity to express my fervent hope that the wealth of ideas that emerged from the recent election process will point the way forward in charting the future course of the International Labour Organization.

For Trinidad and Tobago, a few issues stand out as requiring urgent attention: (i) the duration of the ILC and the oftentimes prohibitive cost for smaller countries who wish to participate; (ii) the need to consider as necessary the contemporary world of work and to review, update and consolidate the provisions of our Conventions and Recommendations; and (iii) the need to recognize the unique challenges which some countries, such as the small island developing States, continue to grapple with in the achievement of decent work for all.

We note with concern the situation in the Standards Committee and look forward to a resolution of this historic development, a resolution that is ef-

fective, borne out of consensus, and which takes us forward in the interest of all member States and the tripartite partners.

As the ILO approaches the milestone of its 100th anniversary, the time has come to undertake a complete review of our operations. Against the backdrop of 200 million jobless workers, and UN reports which point to the possible threat to the world economy arising from austerity measures and galloping social debt, the issues of job creation and people-centred development assume renewed significance. In an era where, in the words of Director-General Somavia, banks are deemed "too big to fail" but people are treated as "too small to matter", the onus is on all of us to take decisive action on the right issues at the right time to ensure the return to job-rich economic growth.

It is by collective commitment that we will continue to deliberate on the most effective mechanisms to reduce poverty and social injustice. It is through coordinated action that decent work policies and programmes will be implemented to create employment, generate wealth, improve working conditions and promote social dialogue. And indeed, it is through our individual and collective resolve that we will work tirelessly to ensure that there is development at all levels of our societies and that the youth and all vulnerable groups are included.

In closing, as we in Trinidad and Tobago prepare to celebrate our 50th anniversary of independence, as well as the 75th anniversary of our labour movement, I wish to reaffirm our commitment to tripartism and long-held ILO ideals, and I look forward to seeing the ILO tripartite family at its best in the period ahead.

Mr MRSIĆ (*Minister of Labour and Pension System, Croatia*)

Even though I am not the first Croatian Minister to speak at the International Labour Conference, I am glad to be the first that has the opportunity to congratulate the newly elected Director-General, Mr Guy Ryder, and wish him a lot of success in his mandate.

On this occasion, I would also like to thank Juan Somavia for his successful work in leading the Organization for three consecutive terms as the Director-General. While each country faces its own challenges, our general problems are more or less the same. We are all facing a global recession that threatens wages, increases unemployment, but also decreases profits and budget revenues. Even though these problems call for Governments to play a more

active role, they can be resolved only through cooperation with the social partners.

Croatia fully supports the International Labour Organization's efforts in the promotion of tripartite cooperation and collective bargaining, which are now needed more than ever. In this speech, I will describe the measures our Government has proposed to tackle the crisis, with special emphasis on youth employment, and finally, I will address the challenges we are facing in the field of social dialogue.

Dear colleagues, as the Minister of Labour of a country that will join the European Union on 1 July next year, I take this opportunity to announce that we will also take a more active part in the International Labour Organization.

In times of crisis, being a Labour Minister is not an easy job. One has to carefully balance the opposed interests of employers and employees, while also bearing in mind that the government budget must be sustainable. In line with the recommendations of economic experts, we have redistributed the tax burden from labour to consumption, thus making our labour market more competitive in comparison with our neighbouring countries. At the same time, we have managed to reduce the budget deficit in order to meet the European criteria and return to sustainable levels. The measures we have introduced for the prevention of tax evasion have not only improved budget revenue, but have also radically improved the payment of workers' social security contributions. We believe that we will be able to restructure the public sector wage system and, in consultation with the social partners, redistribute wage supplements based on efficiency rather than seniority. Even though the European perspective limits our time for reforms, consultations with the social partners cannot be forgotten.

In order to tackle youth unemployment, the Croatian Government has enacted the Employment Incentives Act, under which the Government covers social security contributions for young people and the long-term unemployed over a two-year period. This measure aims at promoting the employment of the lost generation by reducing the cost of employment. Furthermore, we have broadened the government-sponsored internship scheme, in which highly educated young people who have no work experience can participate in on-the-job training while receiving a government subsidy which is equal to the full amount of unemployment benefit. This scheme has had brilliant results in the public sector, requiring a government certificate for permanent employment, and had now been extended to the private sector, which at the same time forces private employers to fulfil training criteria. The Act also simplified employment procedures for temporary seasonal agricultural workers, thus preventing undeclared work in this sector.

To facilitate collective negotiation, we have prepared draft legislation on the criteria for participation in tripartite bodies and on representativeness for collective bargaining, which establishes peer criteria for participation in tripartite bodies for both sides.

In conclusion, I would like to wish you all a successful Conference, and use this opportunity to once again appeal for mutual understanding, which is essential at this time of global crisis.

Original Spanish: Mr ABREÚ (Worker, Dominican Republic)

On behalf of the workers of the Dominican Republic, I would like to congratulate Dr Rafael Alburquerque and Guy Ryder on their respective elections at this Conference.

In the Dominican Republic, the active population includes many young people aged between 16 and 25 years. That is the sector of the population that suffers most from unemployment. This is of major concern for society at large, as is the growth of that working population which, despite their considerable efforts to equip themselves technically and intellectually, are unable to find jobs, in particular decent jobs that are secure, productive, decently remunerated and provide access to social security, dignity, freedom of association and collective bargaining.

This situation has led some members of society, especially in the employer sector, to believe that the solution is precarious work, reducing access to social security, professional training, and introducing more flexible working hours, allegedly as a way of integrating young people into the labour market. However, those measures will only make young people unable to ever break the poverty cycle of their parents.

What we need to understand is that the combat led by Dominican workers and the combat led by everyone that has sacrificed their life to claim their rights, cannot be replaced by a vision, which supposedly integrates youth into the labour market, by undermining the achievements of the Labour Code, turning this labour instrument into an instrument that allows for flexible working hours, free dismissals and precarious working conditions. We do not believe that this is the way forward, because human beings will always seek self-improvement and progress, which justifies our cause and our lives. That state of affairs will thus never prevail.

It is therefore important that this 101st Session of the International Labour Conference has addressed the need for a social protection floor. In our country, Act No. 8701 regulates social security. However, it requires profound changes due to its discriminatory approach. For example, its health provisions are discriminatory against the elderly, against pensioners and retirees. It also establishes a pension system, which was set up in 2001, more than anything, to strengthen the Dominican Republic finance and banking. In light of this, to resolve this situation, the Dominican Republic needs to review the contents of that social security law.

Finally, we would like to indicate that we are completely unsurprised by the stance adopted by the Employers in the Committee on the Application of Standards. That stance mirrors the behaviour of employers in the Dominican Republic and elsewhere, namely, the suppression of freedom of association, avoidance of collective bargaining, and attempts, as I have already mentioned, to introduce more precarious work into the labour market.

We believe in the achievement of the goals of this Conference to promoting the protection of workers' rights, and should moreover see to their further advancement. Workers' rights cannot be secured by undermining the working conditions that have been achieved in the past. Accordingly, we call on men and women of good will, and those striving for a better society, to fight for a better world, because we believe that that world is possible. However this

cannot be achieved if we pay attention to voices promising to build a better world on the destruction of our achievements. No one has ever managed to build something better by undermining the achievements of the progress, struggle, and persistence of humanity.

Long live the fight for a better world!

Mr GAILIŪNAS (Government, Lithuania)

It is my great honour to address you at the 101st Session of the International Labour Conference. The Conference meets here every year, not only to identify main issues in the world of labour relations, but also to take steps to tackle them. This is possible only by the power of our intensive trilateral collaboration.

First of all, I would like to extend Lithuania's gratitude to the Director-General, Juan Somavia. During all three terms of office Mr Somavia emphasized the importance of decent work and fair globalization. His leadership in promoting the core values is an example for all the Members of the ILO and, moreover, other international organizations. I would also like to express appreciation for his enormous work in translating international law into concrete actions leading to the appropriate outcomes.

The global crisis has revealed new challenges and in this context the role of the ILO in shaping new global governance, particularly in the UN system and the G8 and G20 formats, is more important than it has ever been. The economic recovery, in order to be sustainable, should keep up the existing labour standards and take advantage of traditional tripartite dialogue. This gives the ILO a vital role in the process of shaping the global socio-economic future.

I would also like to welcome the newly elected Director-General, Mr Guy Ryder, and encourage him to live up to the significant tasks the Organization faces in the global arena. The profound knowledge, the long-term experience and the personal capacities of Mr Guy Ryder will contribute substantially to the ILO's continued smart influence on shaping the world in the future and will allow the ILO to cope with these challenges.

Dear colleagues, the issues of youth employment and the social protection floor that the ILO has put forward for this session of the Conference are of utmost importance. Indeed, one of the most acute challenges to the stability of our societies is the youth employment crisis. Sad to say, the numbers indicate that 40 per cent of the jobless worldwide are young people. We need to address this issue, first and foremost in order to preserve social cohesion and foster solidarity between the generations. We encourage fellow governments to give serious consideration, as appropriate, to committing to developing youth employment policies consistent with their national obligations and taking into account international labour standards. Adopting a rights-based approach to youth employment and taking other action is necessary in order to tackle this most acute challenge.

Social protection is another challenge that we are all experiencing. Too many people have no access to adequate social security coverage or essential health care, and there are other gaps in social protection. The gap in the social protection system is most adverse amongst the self-employed, own-account workers and workers in irregular forms of employment, who often represent the vast majority of informal economy workers.

I believe that the Recommendation concerning national floors of social protection, when adopted, will serve as a guide for all countries to build a comprehensive social security system and will be a step forward in closing the gaps that exist worldwide, particularly in the developing countries.

Lithuania considers that, besides the abovementioned challenges, the very concept of decent work will remain a central theme on the ILO agenda for the years to come. The Millennium Development Goals and sustainable development could not be achieved without decent work. The essential role of international labour standards and their proper implementation is evident, and we look forward to seeing them reflected in the Rio +20 Conference due to take place later this month in Brazil.

Unlike any other organization, the ILO's particular tripartite structure makes constructive collaboration by governments, employers and employees possible. In this way we can strive for and achieve decisions after the needs of all the parties have been taken into account.

The discussion in the Committee on the Application of Standards tasked the Governing Body with the reinvigoration of the discussion between the social partners. As a Governing Body member, the Lithuanian Government is ready to contribute to this discussion.

Many countries feel the influence of the global crisis in different ways. We believe that cooperation and the ILO's leadership is crucial to recovery from the crisis worldwide through its unique experience and its specific role in global governance, under the wise guidance of the new Director-General.

Original French: Ms DE CONINCK (Minister of Employment, Belgium)

In expressing Belgium's ongoing support for the ILO, I also wish to affirm that my Government agrees with the Director-General that labour, social and environment policies are as relevant as macro-economic policies. The approach based on tripartite consensus is the value added by the ILO.

Here are some of my personal convictions concerning three of the issues at this Conference.

Firstly, the youth employment crisis: with about 75 million young people unemployed in the world in 2011, we face a real risk of a lost generation. But we must not be defeatist. All sectors of society must work together to build the future and shoulder their responsibilities. In Belgium, behind the general label of youth unemployment, we see a reality which chiefly affects young men who have few skills and are often of immigrant origin. We know that life-long education, training and apprenticeships nurture a virtuous circle. Measures targeted towards this vulnerable group of young people and also focus on large cities, where the situation is very worrying, are now necessary. We do not have any choice, given our ageing population. Sectors such as health, caregiving and also urban renewal and the green economy offer us opportunities which we must grasp.

Recently, along with a delegation from the Office, I was in a country close to the European Union, which is faced with significant regional development inequalities; a similar challenge is affecting youth employment. It highlights the importance of geographic mobility, skills matching and the decentralization of initiatives required in order to facilitate access to jobs.

Beyond the employment issues, I would also like to refer to the ideas of Professor Martha Nussbaum on promoting social capital for development, which enables individuals to use their capabilities, that is, their skills, their personal powers of initiative and functionings, “the various things a person may value doing or being”. This is only possible in a political climate which fosters social linkages and trust between groups, thanks to social standards which are promoted by institutions, infrastructures and the appropriate services.

Precisely, the ILO’s standardizing activity and its monitoring of the application of Conventions that have been ratified everywhere is essential, in my opinion. Ratifying is one thing, applying is another. The ILO’s system for monitoring standards must remain effective. I very much hope that, in the wake of the major difficulties encountered in the Committee on the Application of Standards, the Conference will be in a position to adopt measures to avoid any negative misunderstandings about the future of this monitoring system. I would underline that, at this time of crisis, social dialogue must play an essential role in finding specific responses to major challenges. In that regard, I am happy to be able to announce that I shall shortly be launching the procedure for the ratification of the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189). I hope that we will soon be able to join Uruguay in this respect.

While they are unanimously recommended, social protection floors are far from being fully developed in all countries. The crisis is still under way, and has shown that countries that have solid social protection have withstood the crisis better than others. Investing in social protection is therefore a way of better arming oneself against the crisis.

I would also like to thank Director-General Somavia for having ensured that the ILO was able to impose concepts and significant programmes for international cooperation, and I congratulate Mr Ryder on his election.

Mr BEETS (*Government, Netherlands*)

I have the honour to speak today on behalf of the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment of the Netherlands.

In the aftermath of the huge financial crisis, we are confronted with the biggest employment and social crisis since the Second World War. It is therefore important that we are here together. It is good that we have this yearly meeting of the International Labour Conference to discuss and conclude on possible ways to boost the employment situation in the world.

The consequences of the employment crisis are particularly severe for groups with a relatively vulnerable position on the labour market. This is especially the case for young people. In the Netherlands, we are also faced with growth in youth unemployment, so we think it very opportune to have this general discussion during the Conference. Fighting unemployment, including youth unemployment, needs to be done within a sound, financially sustainable framework. Such a sustainable budgetary and financial framework is a necessary condition for lasting employment growth, certainly for the longer term. Therefore the Netherlands has undertaken a bold reform package to limit the effects of the economic crisis – not easy, but, we think, absolutely necessary.

Building on its specific mandate and expertise, the ILO can make a valuable and indispensable contribution to sustainable, job-rich recovery. When discussing conditions for sustainable growth and employment and the role of the ILO in particular, fundamental labour standards are key.

One of the cornerstones of the ILO is the supervision mechanism. We therefore deeply regret that, for the first time in the history of the Committee on the Application of Standards, agreement could not be reached upon a list of cases to be discussed in this Committee. We are of the opinion that this must not happen again.

I very much hope that the responsible constituents of the ILO will be able to find a solution for the problems that have arisen and that this solution will be reached through open, continuous communication among all parties.

Standards should provide a basis for sustainable employment growth. International standards should also leave Governments sufficient flexibility to implement them according to national circumstances. Here, I repeat what my Minister said in this same place last year. An approach to international standards agreed upon by all constituents is needed. We need to be firm on principles and rights at work, but flexible on how to implement them. I am convinced that this can be achieved without lowering protection standards. Such an approach enhances the chances of standards being ratified, and thus the chance of overall success.

The draft Recommendation on the social protection floor is a good example of the ILO responding in a modern and flexible way to new questions that arise in this day and age. This draft Recommendation is of great importance. Member States can build social security protection systems based on national developments, using the technical assistance of the ILO and other relevant international organizations, and in this way build a better future for the millions who need it.

The Netherlands is convinced that the orientations and overarching priorities during the recurrent discussions will contribute significantly to improving the effective and universal respect, promotion and realization of fundamental principles and rights at work, and will guide the Office in undertaking its duties in a timely and proper manner. It is our hope that this will improve the lives of millions of workers worldwide.

In closing, we would like to thank Mr Juan Somavia, our Director-General, for all he has done for the ILO and for bringing the Organization to where it is today. I congratulate Mr Guy Ryder on his election as the new Director-General. I think that Mr Ryder has an enormous challenge ahead of him, and I wish him strength and wisdom in his new role. I would like to assure him that we will work with him from the Netherlands’ point of view with a positive attitude in order to further enhance the ILO as a modern organization, fit to respond to new challenges and the needs of its constituents in the world of work.

Original Spanish: Mr DE MENDIGUREN (Employer, Argentina)

As President of the Argentine Industrial Union (UIA) and delegate to this Conference, it is an honour for me to represent my Argentinian colleagues. During these days of the Conference, reports have been given on the progress that has been made on decent work, social dialogue and employment poli-

cies in our country. Returning to the ILO, an organization based on dialogue and in-depth debate among workers, employers and governments, is always an honour that procures us great satisfaction, due to the constancy and commitment of the Organization in all areas relating to the development of production and employment. This also highlights the relevance of giving this Organization a voice and a place in the G20.

I would like to highlight the work of the ILO in intellectual, political and technical spheres to place the world of work back on the development agenda, which is a task that we pursue in our country on a daily basis.

In this forum, all the representatives of the tripartite system refer to labour and social concerns, setting them in a framework of distribution policies, conscious that labour concerns transcend the sphere of mere costs; they are relevant in terms of domestic demand and market size, two sides of the same phenomenon. This is a key issue for us as employers, and it is essential in terms of the welfare and well-being of the population, its consumption capacity and its degree of social integration.

In this daily task, I would like to commend the leadership of Juan Somavia, who was the first Director-General from the southern hemisphere. The election of the new Director-General, to whom I extend my warmest welcome, is a sign of the maturity and stature of the International Labour Organization. In a world riddled with tripartite challenges on a global scale, I have no doubt that the new Director-General's experience of trade unions and technical competence will be key in addressing those challenges.

The election of the new Director-General marks the beginning of a new stage, at a critical juncture in the international situation. We know that the crisis, which began in 2008, has yet to be resolved. We have daily evidence of its impact on economic activity and productivity, and of its inexorable effect on employment and working conditions.

In this context, as developing countries, we are concerned to see how in certain multilateral forums we still hear talk of austerity as if this was an undisputable recipe for overcoming the international crisis. In Argentina, we have learned that growing unemployment and recession generate a vicious circle which leads to shrinking markets, lower production, more precarious jobs, a drop in tax income and social chaos, not to mention the tremendous harm done by trying to repay sovereign debt without taking the real capabilities of each individual country into consideration.

In view of this, repositioning the world of labour, and employment in particular, as the main source of sustainable demand and production is a key objective. It is crucial that we ensure that programmes and policies for economic recovery take into consideration the real development of an economy based on the virtuous circle of production, employment and consumption, where finance plays a supporting rather than a central and predominant role.

In this context, productive investment and innovation are of fundamental importance. In particular, innovative policies that support SMEs and young entrepreneurs have to be taken into consideration, not only in order to sustain growth but also to ensure that improved productivity and competitiveness are not achieved to the detriment of employment. For us, who aspire to become a developed

industrialized country, this is not possible on the basis of low wages. We need to innovate in order to develop overarching medium and long-term policies. That is why we consider it particularly appropriate that the Conference agenda includes important issues of youth employment and entrepreneurship amongst young people, which have been placed at the heart of the debate.

Another central issue is the need to set social protection floors, to create a national network able to provide basic income and services. We are working to promote private initiatives but we understand that economic growth must be addressed through a number of other factors.

The economic crisis, which is not only financial but also affects production, trade and social concerns, has put 75 million young people out of work across the world. Leaders need to understand the need for a new economic order, centred on decent jobs and production.

The rate of social change in the world outstrips leaders' capacity to react. We have an obligation to act rapidly in order to change this situation. Together, employers, workers and governments need to create a new vision of the future. We therefore believe that economic and social agreements and in-depth dialogue between the three parties are essential.

Mr KUDATGOBILIK (*Employer, Turkey*)

I have great pleasure in extending to you all my personal and organizational best wishes for a successful session and a constructive Conference.

Before my remarks, I want to express our great appreciation and gratitude to Mr Somavia for his outstanding performance as a Director-General. His tenure will be remembered as a significant milestone in a nearly century-long ILO history. During his years in Office, we have witnessed some key improvements in the role of the ILO on international policy coherence and international politics.

Undoubtedly, our new Director-General, Mr Guy Ryder, will take his achievement one step further, I believe. In this regard, as a Turkish Employers' delegate, I would like to congratulate Mr Ryder on becoming our new Director-General, wishing him good luck and much success.

As indicated in the Director-General's Report, the internal governance of the ILO has been significantly modernized over the last 13 years. The results-based management approach, which was initiated by Mr Somavia, will contribute to the strengthening of the ILO's present and future institutional role and capacity.

The first signs of the global crisis were seen in 2007 and it has continued since then. Owing to the crisis, we have witnessed slower growth and even recession in several economies, record unemployment figures, intractable public debt, unpronounced bankruptcies of certain countries – particularly in the eurozone – inefficient public policies and the ensuing fall in consumer and business confidence.

The failure of policy-makers to respond to the crisis with effective policies has further undermined progress. But we have learned from this crisis and, as a country, we have experienced good economic recovery. I want to share some figures on that: economic growth in 2011 was 8.5 per cent, ranking Turkey the second fastest-growing economy after China; unemployment dropped to 8.9 per cent; in-

dustrial production increased by 8.9 per cent; and exports increased by almost 20 per cent.

With regard to the long-awaited legislative amendment for the modification of the Collective Labour Relations Act in my country, we have taken a big step toward a new regulation and a new draft. The new legislation is now before Parliament and is likely to be passed before the end of this month. In this connection, I have to emphasize that the final text is the result of tripartite negotiations among the Turkish social partners, including the most representative organizations of employers and workers. So, I take particular pleasure in pointing out that social dialogue is shaping new labour relations. In addition, the new Turkish Code of Obligations and the Turkish Commercial Code have been finalized, all with the assistance of the tripartite partners.

Finally, my organization, the Turkish Confederation of Employer Associations (TİSK) will celebrate its 50th anniversary this December. As the sole organization representing Turkish employers before the ILO, TİSK has been fulfilling important duties for the economic and social development of Turkish enterprises at home and abroad since 1962.

I hope that the 101st Session of the International Labour Conference will contribute to world labour peace and welfare.

Original Arabic: Mr BADR (Government, Egypt)

First of all, I would like to congratulate the President on his election and thank him for the excellent manner in which he has led our deliberations. I am honoured to deliver this speech on behalf of the Ministers of Labour of the Non-Aligned Movement.

(Speaker continues in English.)

The Non-Aligned Movement Labour Ministers welcome the election of Mr Guy Ryder as the new Director-General of the ILO, which took place on 28 May 2012, during the 314th Session of the Governing Body. We express our congratulations to Mr Ryder, as well as our support for his future leadership of the Office to preserve and promote the interests of all Members of the Organization, while upholding the principles of tripartism and social dialogue. We extend, in this respect, our sincere thanks and appreciation to the current ILO Director-General, Mr Juan Somavia, for his efforts in achieving the noble goals of the ILO: peace, human dignity and social justice.

The Non-Aligned Movement Labour Ministers would like to seize this opportunity to reaffirm the need to restructure the membership of the Governing Body of the ILO in order to allow adequate representation by all regions and, in particular, by developing countries currently with low levels of representation in the Governing Body.

The Non-Aligned Movement Labour Ministers renew the call to all member States that have not ratified the 1986 amendments to the ILO Constitution to do so as a matter of priority. The Ministers invite the Office to brief Members, on a regular basis, through the Governing Body, on actions taken in this regard.

In view of developments in the Committee on the Application of Standards during the 101st Session of the Conference, the Non-Aligned Movement Labour Ministers reiterate the urgent need for continued improvements in the working methods of the Committee on the Application of Standards with the objective of making them more transparent, democ-

atic and responsive to the well-established principles of the ILO. Such improvements are needed to enable the Committee to fulfil its mandate in the appropriate manner. We believe that the balance of the list and the individual cases should be the only guiding principle in the selection of these cases by the Committee. The current lack of balance between fundamental and technical Conventions, and the fact that Conventions on freedom of association and collective bargaining account for most of the cases examined, has to be addressed with a view to including more technical Conventions on the list.

The Non-Aligned Movement Labour Ministers believe that the ILO has a role to play, in particular, in providing assistance to developing and least-developed countries, where the depressed state of labour markets drives many young people to long-term unemployment. We believe that such a role has to be mainstreamed with that of the United Nations in global governance and international crises, taking into account the roles of other international organizations.

The Non-Aligned Movement Labour Ministers, while welcoming the adoption of the draft Recommendation on the social protection floor by the 101st Session of the Conference, believe that countries are encouraged to determine national strategies on social protection, depending on their own socioeconomic conditions, fiscal space and their priorities linked with employment and other social policies.

The Non-Aligned Movement Labour Ministers condemn the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories, as well as the occupied territories in the Syrian Golan, and express the rejection of Israeli policies.

The Non-Aligned Movement Labour Ministers express their support for all efforts aiming at uniting the Palestinian national struggle for the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital, as well as for achieving lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East on the basis of international law and relevant United Nations resolutions.

We also express our support for the legal strategy adopted by the Palestinian National Authority aimed at enabling the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights, including the rights to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty, and the right of return to their homes. We also express our support for Palestinian efforts to obtain observer status in the United Nations General Assembly.

Finally, the Non-Aligned Movement Labour Ministers reaffirm their commitment to defending and promoting the Non-Aligned Movement's positions in the context of the ILO and, in that regard, agree to continue to hold their meetings during sessions of the International Labour Conference, as a common forum to advance their interests and priorities.

Original Turkish: Mr KUMLU (Worker, Turkey)

Before I start my speech, I would like to thank Director-General, Mr Somavia, for his important contribution to decent work, social justice and peace all around the world. In addition, we congratulate Mr Guy Ryder on his new post as the Director-General of the ILO, starting in October, and wish him every success. We know Mr Ryder very well due to his previous position as the General Secretary of the ITUC.

Since the 100th Session of the International Labour Conference, we have witnessed nothing but unemployment, poverty, increased injustice, unorganized societies and unhappy people, as the world has been driven into a social and economic deadlock.

In accordance with the G20 Labour and Employment Ministers Meeting held in Mexico, 1.5 per cent growth in employment makes it impossible to close the employment gap. The ILO has declared that youth unemployment has increased by 4 million since 2007. Female workers are used as cheap labour and they are the main source of undeclared employment.

Under such negative conditions, the path to follow and the things to be done are obvious if we are to further the happiness of all humanity. It is difficult to understand why all the plans being implemented are designed to save the finance industry and the system which happens to be the main cause of the crisis. In many countries, including Europe, and even America, the workers are reacting against the formation of a class composed of the working poor. They are doing so through various demonstrations and by expressing their preferences in general elections.

In my country things become much more difficult when the informal economy is taken into account. That economy adds to the present issues. As an alternative to unemployment and poverty, people are being forced to work in the informal economy and in indecent conditions.

The aim of the National Employment Strategy is to boost employment regulations and it includes provisions on labour practices, including flexible work and private employment agencies.

Furthermore, the Government aims to lower the national minimum wage among the regions and states and to amend legislation concerning severance pay, which we see as a part of the workers' wage and a guarantee for the future. I would like to underline the fact that any initiative against severance pay, which is the only lump sum that workers receive in their lifetime, will constitute a reason to hold a general strike. All these regulations are made without considering the national realities; such regulations would deprive workers of adequate social protection and decent pay.

It gives me great regret to express the fact that there are some international organizations which accept and support the informal economy and try to legitimize it. I would like to remind those organizations that what should really be done is to find a job for the unemployed and transform precarious work into decent jobs.

Turkey ranks third among the countries with the highest work accident rates, while it is first among European countries in that regard. Shortcomings in implementation are the main reasons for this. In this context we demand the immediate enforcement of the occupational safety and health legislation, which is still being discussed by the parliament, and the elimination of delays in the implementation of that legislation.

Legislative amendments and preparations for a new Constitution that will have a direct effect on working life and trade union rights are currently under way in Turkey. The Constitution currently being prepared should enforce the social State, while securing international standards, specifically of the EU and ILO in terms of industrial relations. It

should also guarantee the right to organize, the right to strike, the right to collective bargaining and all of the fundamental rights and freedoms. The adoption by the Grand National Assembly of legislation prohibiting the right to strike in the aviation sector at the time this session of the Conference began proves the necessity of securing the international standards enshrined in the Constitution.

The draft collective labour relations act, which unifies the Trade Unions Act and the Collective Labour Agreement, Strike and Lock-out Act into a single piece of legislation, is on the agenda of the parliament. This draft, on which the parties cannot reach full consensus, should be amended in accordance with the demands of the workers, and should be brought into force immediately. The main aim of the law is to ensure that workers can join unions without fear and to lift all of the obstacles confronting unionization, while securing the existence of strong unions. It is compulsory to secure the right to organize in my country, where organizing activities in the workplace often result in dismissals.

In addition, I would like to state that an amendment was made concerning civil servants' union rights with a law which entered into force in April. This amendment does not, however, provide for the right to strike and engage in collective bargaining for civil servants, which it should in order to comply with the ILO Conventions. Many public servants still do not enjoy these rights owing to legal limitations and they cannot become union members. The employers on the tripartite consultation board prepare the agenda unilaterally and the supreme arbitration board is composed, in the main, of employers and cannot, therefore, correspond to the expectations of workers under such circumstances.

I wish for social justice and decent work in order to avoid further crises and disasters.

Ms BRIGHI (*Worker, Italy*)

At the outset, I would like to thank Director-General Somavia for his leadership, which enabled the ILO to gain a growing international role and recognition by governments, international institutions, as well as the G20.

During his mandate, key decisions have been taken: the introduction of the principle of decent work; the 2008 Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization; the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, the Global Jobs Pact and the new Conventions, which became key instruments in facing the severe employment crisis affecting most of the world's countries, a crisis that originated from the failure of the prevailing model of growth and globalization.

Several countries face deep recession. Unemployment statistics are appalling in both developing and industrialized countries, and are accompanied by increasingly precarious jobs, reduction in workers' rights and, where they exist, fewer protection measures, leaving hundreds of millions of people, particularly youth and women, with no future. Growth is too often based on labour exploitation. Forced labour is growing as are export processing zones (EPZs), where trade unions are forbidden and no rights are recognized.

It is impossible to overcome such an unprecedented employment crisis, unless governments and international institutions listen to the real people and adopt courageous, strong, coordinated measures to change patterns of growth; prioritize employment

creation with coordinated action to stabilize global demand; and introduce binding financial regulations to stop speculation from ruling markets and countries and to stop boosting irresponsible behaviour by multinationals and their supply chains.

The promise of putting jobs first, made by governments at the beginning of the crisis, has vanished and been replaced by businesses' usual policy and austerity measures that have contributed to the rise in unemployment and the spiral of social exclusion. It will be more and more difficult to emerge from this, unless governments take urgent action to increase public investment in job creation, education and training, infrastructure, greening the economy and promoting quality public services.

We requested that the G20 governments adopt a Youth Jobs Pact based on ILO standards, as core elements of the Growth and Jobs Plan, to increase demand; to approve binding measures to regulate and limit the size and complexity of global banks and to curtail financial speculation; and to promote the implementation of the Jobs and Growth Plan through the introduction of a financial transaction tax and the eradication of tax havens. International trade unions have clearly stated that it is democratic governments, not financial markets, which should set the policy agenda.

This Conference has discussed priority issues that can contribute to the solution of the crisis. The conclusion of the general discussion on the youth employment crisis and the elaboration of a Recommendation on the social protection floor must see immediate implementation by the governments, starting with clear commitments to be taken at the next G20 summit in Los Cabos.

In this global crisis, workers' rights are continuously being undermined, particularly freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining. I welcome the strong conclusions of the recurrent discussion on fundamental principles and rights at work that reaffirmed that these are human rights and enabling conditions for all workers, and we look forward to the strong plan of action that the Office and Organization will put into place for the upcoming four years.

At the same time, I am obliged to deeply criticize the Employers' behaviour that impeded discussion in the Committee on the Application of Standards of some of the worst cases of workers' rights violations in countries such as Greece, Guatemala, Egypt, Fiji, Colombia and Swaziland. Their irresponsible attack on the credibility of the ILO supervisory mechanism and on the independence and mandate of the Committee of Experts accused them of improperly linking Convention No. 87, a principle underlined by long-standing jurisprudence. We need to safeguard such a delicate tripartite mechanism.

Regarding Burma, we appreciate the new positive commitments of the Burmese Government on forced labour and freedom of association that, thanks to the new law, can be exercised despite too many limitations. We must underline that forced labour continues to be exacted, particularly by the military. We urge the implementation of a joint action plan through consultation with workers' and employers' organizations in order to eradicate forced labour well before the established deadline.

The Workers agreed to review the 1999 and suspended 2000 Recommendation. These commitments have to be coupled with necessary and practi-

cal arrangements, following the Government's limitation on the Federation of Trade Unions – Burma (FTUB) leadership's return to Burma to freely work as trade unions as an effective social partner.

Finally, I congratulate Guy Ryder on his election as the new Director-General of the ILO, and Italian trade unions know his great leadership and know his commitment to tripartism. We are sure that his knowledge and wisdom will enable the ILO to become a crucial Organization for the solution of the problem of work in the world, make the Office more and more effective and dynamic, and attract resources to be used in promoting social justice and dignity for all working women and men.

Original Arabic: Mr ABDALLA (Minister of Labour, Sudan)

At the outset, allow me, on behalf of the delegation of Sudan to extend our warm congratulations to you, on your election as President of this 101st Session of the International Labour Conference. We are confident in your capacity to manage efficiently this Organization.

I would also like to express our profound appreciation and gratitude to all the managers and assistants from all grades, on their valuable efforts and interest in the excellent preparation of this session.

As you are all well aware, an extraordinary session of the ILO Governing Body was held, prior to this Conference, designed specifically to the appointment and election procedures of a new Director-General, as a successor to Mr Juan Somavia, who is the current Director-General. He surprised us all, and made us sad by his decision to advance the date of the end of his mandate. We hoped that Mr Somavia would be able to overcome the circumstances that pushed him into taking such a decision so that he can continue the path of outstanding generosity and sacrifice till the end of his third term in office at the head of the Organization. He gave a practical example of a man who is from a country in the South, capable of occupying a leading global position.

However, our deep regret at the departure of Mr Juan Somavia shall not deter us from warmly welcoming Mr Guy Ryder, the new Director-General, who we hope would be a good successor to his predecessor. We extend to him our heartfelt congratulations, and request him to continue the work of his predecessor, who succeeded in leaving his mark on the Organization through decent work, and through the social protection floor on the basis of which comprehensive economic development is to flourish. The final aim is to realize the aspirations and interests of individuals and societies on an equal footing.

History seems to repeat itself. Today, the events which are occurring in this world do not differ much from those which occurred in the wake of the First World War, with subsequent social and economic problems; the most important of which are the following: widespread unemployment; family break ups; widespread endemic diseases; increased incidence of poverty; economic recession; and a reduced coverage of social protection and justice. They are all factors which gave birth to the International Labour Organization in 1919.

Humanity suffered from such problems in the past because of the woes of war. Today, it suffers from the woes of unjust globalization which transformed the world into a situation governed by symbols which believe in the survival of the fittest. Conse-

quently, it does not treat human beings well, as it requires a measure of wisdom and equanimity. No one was spared the consequences of unjust globalization, which has recently led to the outburst of a wave of protests, and a series of disturbances led by youth groups, who continue to suffer from the worsening problem of unemployment, which also spread in the developed countries. As a result, the world witnessed widespread popular uprisings in several countries, some of which were referred to by the “Arab Spring” while others were referred to as the “Western Summer”. Did any one of us imagine that one day the unemployment rate among young persons in a number of developed countries would reach 40 per cent?

On behalf of the oppressed peoples who continue to suffer from the calamity of unjust globalization, we call upon the international community to address its shortcomings, in all equanimity so that we are able to reform it before it destroys every aspect of life. We also call upon the ILO to lead this initiative, in its capacity as an international and mature agency, which is concerned with the formulation of social and economic policies in order to achieve the stability and welfare of the international community. We ask the ILO to help us in getting rid of double standards, and the economic war which is practised against us, through some international institutions, spurred on by some symbols of the unjust globalization system. Why is a country like the Sudan deprived from reimbursing its contribution to the budgets of regional and international organizations through the normal bank channels? Why is the Sudan targeted in its vital projects and utilities as seen recently through the burning and destruction of the oil installations in the Hajleej region, and before it, the pharmaceutical factory? What is the fault of tens of thousands of workers and families who were displaced, and lost, as a result of the haphazard acts, which, we believe, had been perpetrated by the symbols of unjust globalization? Why is the Sudan deprived of the blessing of peaceful co-existence with its neighbour, the new State of South Sudan, and the sparking of dissention between them, so as to turn the common borders into a renewed war stage instead of being a crossing of mutual benefits? Why is the Sudan not being praised for its seriousness and its commitment in implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed during 2005, with respect to South Sudan, and its contribution in the establishment of the new State, and its recognition? Why is the Sudan not being commended for its good offices to achieve peace in all of its conflicting regions; the most recent of which was the signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement in the city of Doha, during 2011?

The Government and people of the Sudan commend the ILO for its role, and for its valuable contribution in combating occupational and racial discrimination, and putting an end to it, in a few countries. In this context, we call on the ILO to increase its efforts in support of the people and workers of Palestine, and to help them get rid of the woes of discrimination and oppression due to Israeli occupation and settlement.

There are a number of technical reports before this session. They deal with three important issues which are: the social protection floor; the youth employment crisis; and fundamental principles and rights at work. We are pleased to provide our support to the Organization for its direction, and its

efforts with respect to these issues, and other labour issues. We also hope that we will succeed in benefiting from the perspectives offered in such reports, so as to develop and review our national policies and legislation, in accordance with the requirements of the current circumstances, and in consultation with the social partners.

The Republic of the Sudan, in spite of being a developing country, continues to suffer from the woes of external greed, and political conspiracies. However, it is intent on observing international labour standards. We are also proud of our pioneering experience in the area of social security, as we are the first country in Africa, and in the Middle East, which has legislation in this field. Thus, a Pensions Act was promulgated in 1904. Against this historical background, the city of Khartoum was selected to be the headquarters of the Arab Centre for Social Security, of the Arab Labour Organization. In this respect, another Act on Social Security relating to workers in the private sector was promulgated in 1974. We also have other regulations which are related to social protection such as the Act which relates to compensation for occupational accidents; the Act on Health Insurance; the Act which relates to the regulation of work; the Act on Public Work which includes special sections on the conditions governing the employment of children and women, in addition to end of service benefits.

We, in the Sudan, believe that young people constitute the present and future of our nation. They are the builders and protectors of our nation. They are the source of its human energy. We also believe that women represent half of society. The development of society cannot advance without the participation of women – and they represent half of society. It is for this reason that the State is intent on addressing the crisis of youth and women’s employment through its adoption of a special funding policy to support small and medium-sized enterprises, as a means to stimulate the social and economic development process. Thus, in 2011, the President of the Republic decided to earmark 12 per cent of bank investments to fund such enterprises.

The Sudan has the honour to collaborate with the ILO on fundamental principles and rights at work, through its ratification of seven of the fundamental international labour Conventions. We shall also start the ratification procedures of the remaining Conventions, as soon as the current circumstances are lifted.

Ms OLIPHANT (*Minister of Labour, South Africa*)

First allow me to congratulate you on your elections as Presidents and Vice-Presidents of this session.

In October 2011, South Africa hosted the 12th African Regional Meeting of the ILO. In his address to that meeting, the outgoing Director-General, Mr Juan Somavia, stated: “I am in Africa – a continent I love and respect. A region full of women and men who are my friends and colleagues, with whom I have shared ideals and struggles and have seen difficulties and deceptions together. Sisters and brothers of all ages who are an integral part of my extended international family. A family which believes that societies can be better, that positive change is possible and that ultimately, values, vision and a certain degree of volunteerism to make things happen can prevail over the moral indifference that pervades so much of our world today. We

know this is not easy to accomplish. We also know that if we do not, we will not be proud of the world we are leaving our children.”

The outgoing Director-General has indeed been a true friend of Africa. We will miss him. The most meaningful tribute that we can pay will be to pursue positive change in many of the programmatic areas that have been introduced into the work of the ILO during his tenure as Director-General. Many of these areas have a strong resonance with the social and development priorities of the continent and its people – the Decent Work Agenda and the social protection floor are just two that come to mind.

Central to our approach in South Africa is the recognition of the enormous responsibility of all social partners to contribute in different ways and, in particular, to contribute through effective social dialogue to the creation of more and better jobs.

The ILO has a significant influence on our policies. The New Growth Path adopted by the South African Government as the framework for economic policy and the country’s jobs strategy makes decent work central to efforts to stimulate the rate of economic growth and the employment intensity of that growth. The draft National Policy Plan – Vision for 2030 for South Africa, now being finalized, has also elevated decent work in its proposals for development and labour policies to take the country forward to 2030. The Plan recognizes the importance of balancing the need for faster expansion of employment opportunities with the protection of labour rights.

As the Director-General’s report notes, attention is now turning to the feasibility of decent work policies. Comparative analysis, guidelines and technical support will be important as discussion turns increasingly to issues relating to the feasibility, cost and benefits of decent work strategies.

Clear measurement and monitoring frameworks will also be needed to evaluate progress and determine impact.

In this regard, the South African Decent Work Country Programme has made good progress in formulating a set of decent work indicators drawing on official statistics available in South Africa, complemented by administrative data. The technical support of the ILO must be acknowledged in this regard and also in relation to the support provided in a number of other areas.

ILO technical assistance has been provided to the country’s Expanded Public Works Programme and also to the more recently established Community Works Programme. In the light of the structural unemployment problem faced by South Africa, public works programmes continue to have an important place in our active labour market policies.

In implementing the Decent Work Agenda in Africa, we need strong international agencies to provide guidance and technical support now more than ever. There are many challenges in the labour market and many vulnerable workers that need the standards and services provided by the ILO. The standard-setting work of the ILO and the labour market governance Conventions will play a particularly important role.

As highlighted by the outgoing Director-General in his opening address, respect for fundamental principles and rights at work comes under pressure in a time of economic uncertainty. In South Africa there has been a sustained campaign through the media and by commentators calling for deregulation

of the labour market and the relaxation of dismissal requirements. We have, however, made progress towards ratification of the Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81), the Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129), and the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189).

Work is also progressing on a review of our Code of Good Practice and Technical Assistance Guidelines on HIV and AIDS in the light of the ILO HIV and AIDS Recommendation, 2010 (No. 200), concerning HIV/AIDS and the world of work. With the technical assistance of the ILO we have recently completed an analysis of the prospect of ratifying the ILO Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention (No. 102). This should be viewed in the context of strengthening of social security in response to the global economic crisis, and enhancement of the Decent Work Agenda.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Director-General for his excellent Report. We would also acknowledge his contribution to the ILO and all its member States during his tenure as Director-General.

The South African Government is confident that the voice of labour is more audible on the international stage now than it was a decade ago, in part due to the efforts of the Director-General. This is as it should be.

In a context of weak economic growth, a resurgence of austerity and calls for greater labour market flexibility, the interests of labour will need strong support in the years ahead.

Allow me then to congratulate Mr Guy Ryder on his election as the tenth Director-General of the ILO with effect from October 2012. Mr Ryder’s outstanding track record in the ILO and the international trade union movement will no doubt stand him in good stead as Director-General. He can be assured of our continued support.

In conclusion, I would like to congratulate South Sudan for being the latest nation to join the ILO. We all know that South Sudan has come a long way to be the world’s youngest nation and even though challenges still remain they have proved that dialogue, the centrepiece of our work, does indeed work.

Original Russian: Mr BYKOVETS (Employer, Ukraine)

The 101st Session of the International Labour Conference is taking place in a time of gradual economic recovery after the recent financial economic crisis. In a sense, the crisis did have a positive impact, in that it had a sobering effect on the international community and prompted it to seek new approaches to sustainable growth and progressive social development.

In Ukraine, we are still facing the aftermath of the crisis, and it is still too early to say that the country has arrived at a stage of sustainable economic development. We thus see our task as speeding up this process, together with our social partners. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the system of social partnership in our country has withstood the test of resilience. We have considerably expanded co-operation among workers, employers and the Government.

In uniting the efforts of social partners under the National Tripartite Socio-economic Council under the President of Ukraine, our main goal is to modernize and create new jobs which ensure decent work. However, we believe that the best guarantor

of employment is a free and competitive labour market which will create quality jobs.

Modernization should create greater flexibility in the labour market and replace sham protective measures with more effective ones. We have no doubt that these changes will be in line with international labour standards and with the ILO concept of decent work. We also intend to avail ourselves of the experience of the EU, as laid down in its directives and regulations on employment, labour relations and occupational safety and health.

Another imperative of today's reality is the need to reduce government intervention in economic processes, to eliminate obsolete and ineffective micro-management – and this holds true not only for Ukraine. The Government must switch to universal measures to support business through appropriate incentives.

An effective measure to boost business in our country could be the introduction of temporary tax relief for new businesses. This would give the young creative elements that exist in all societies an opportunity to develop their business ideas. This, in turn, would lead to more job creation. It does not make sense to tax jobs that do not yet exist.

We understand that measures such as these, in addition to the political will on the part of the authorities, involve complex legislative amendment procedures. Accordingly, the employers of Ukraine decided to assist the Government by demonstrating the effectiveness of such measures in practice. In one region of the Ukraine, we have established a special investment fund to create an enabling environment for young entrepreneurs, primarily by providing them with financial assistance in the start-up phase. We hope that the experience and the results obtained by this business incubator will ultimately assist in the formulation of government policies for young entrepreneurs.

The ILO is the only international agency in the United Nations system specializing in labour issues. Its tripartite composition provides an opportunity to develop balanced approaches to labour policy, based on sustainable enterprise development. This unique particularity needs to be strengthened.

The most natural means of strengthening the authority of the ILO is undoubtedly giving effect to previously established international labour standards and programme documents of the ILO. It is very important for ILO Conventions and Recommendations always to be duly implemented, and for the concept of decent work to be rapidly translated into our common achievement.

I have the pleasure of informing you that today the tripartite delegation of Ukraine signed a new Decent Work Country Programme for 2012–15. The main objective of the Programme is to promote decent work as it is a factor of productivity and a key element of social and labour development in Ukraine. The employers of Ukraine view the Programme as a practical and balanced instrument which is appropriate to address these issues.

In this Programme, we set out realistic goals for ensuring decent work, social protection and safe working conditions. We are convinced that the achievement of these goals will be possible only through social dialogue.

The Government of Ukraine and social partners already have a considerable amount of successful experience of cooperation with the ILO, based on the Decent Work Country Programme in Ukraine.

Our cooperation includes all of the ongoing programmes that are being implemented by the ILO with its social partners.

The employers of Ukraine recognize the need to focus our efforts on disseminating the principles of decent work throughout Ukraine, bearing in mind all of its four components, with the aim of optimizing our prospects for social progress and development.

Promoting and strengthening partnership-based labour relations in Ukraine, fostering a culture of trust, and a shared responsibility among all the tripartite stakeholders based on a fair distribution of incomes – this is the only approach that can contribute directly to transforming the risks arising from the financial crisis into new opportunities.

Original French: Mr WINDEY (Representative, International Association of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions)

Allow me first of all, on behalf of the International Association of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions (AICESIS), to commend the quality of the report presented to the Conference.

Supported by figures, this report indicates the massive scale of the problem of youth employment in the context of the world crisis we are going through.

The message of the report is unambiguous: young people are more vulnerable and particularly exposed to unemployment and to precarious work stemming from the crisis.

This scourge is rendering a whole generation incapable of finding a job, thus denying them enjoyment of the fundamental right to work and all other rights deriving from it.

This is depriving States of real potential and of an essential resource for promoting growth. So we are faced with a major challenge: to find sustainable and appropriate responses to enable society to be renewed and to promote, with strength and determination, the solidarity between generations which is now being undermined.

It is a complex problem and it is not just a matter of employment. It can undermine the confidence of young people with regard to public policies, training, education, housing and living conditions in general.

It is essential that the whole of organized society makes a contribution to meeting this fundamental challenge. This is absolutely essential: without the involvement of all social players there can be no success.

The economic and social councils and similar institutions of the world have an important role to play here. When they are involved, all of the forces of society are involved, and all economic and social partners can swing into action.

Through the way they are anchored and the links they have within society, and given the position they occupy in state institutional systems, economic and social councils and similar institutions have considerable scope for action, especially in terms of awareness raising, for the development of flexible mechanisms or the orientation of policy towards solutions that are geared to the reality on the ground.

They have the possibility to promote many different measures to flank development and evaluate public policies including those devoted to employ-

ment and human development. I welcome the fact that most of these institutions have addressed the subject of youth employment and that this is a key topic for our global association.

These institutions play an active coordination and follow-up role by seeking to integrate the initiatives and measures arising from the commitments that States have entered into regarding employment, access to decent work and social protection.

AICESIS also has a role to play. It is the umbrella organization for more than 70 national institutions at present. Its task is to develop and intensify social dialogue with a view to contributing towards fruitful forms of consensus, including social covenants. Social dialogue is an essential means for ensuring the coherence, legitimacy and effectiveness of the policies implemented.

Giving an institutional aspect to this dialogue is the way to long-term success. Social dialogue has to be nourished and maintained and in this way it can contribute towards establishing stability and peace.

For this reason AICESIS has been supporting the setting up of economic and social councils and similar institutions in countries that are considering it.

In conclusion, AICESIS would like to emphasize how much importance it attaches to the work of the ILO and to the contribution it intends to make itself.

The ILO, by proposing the involvement of social partners in the formulation and implementation of programmes for promoting decent work, is also issuing a call to economic and social committees and similar institutions. We welcome and support this approach and intend to step up our efforts in this direction.

Let me express the satisfaction of my organization at the adoption of the recent cooperation agreement between itself and the ILO. I am sure that it will be the means of ensuring the mutually fruitful development of relations between our two organizations.

Original Spanish: Mr ANARÓ (Representative, Confederación de Trabajadores y Trabajadoras de las Universidades de las Américas)

It is a great honour for me to address you once more on behalf of CONTUA, an organization which represents more than 500,000 university workers in 17 Latin American countries.

At the outset, let me say that we come to this Conference with many concerns. Cases of violations of workers' fundamental rights have continued to increase over the last year in many Latin American countries. To give you a brief overview, let me say that in Ecuador, over 15,000 people have been dismissed in the public sector, and one of our greatest leaders, the Secretary-General of FENATUPE, Marcelo Neto Vizcaíno, has been subjected to arbitrary dismissal at the hands of the rector, in a clear violation of trade union rights.

In Peru, the use of litigation in trade union conflicts has escalated to such a degree that currently, the outgoing Chairman of FENTUP is risking arrest for having participated in a trade union meeting without the permission of a judge.

In Panama – as has been denounced to this Conference by the Secretary-General of the University of Panama Employees' Association (ASEUPA), Damián Espino Castillo, who is here in the room with me – the Government continues to refuse to recognize the right of public sector workers to unionize, thus violating the right to the full exercise of freedom of association. We call for the establish-

ment of collective bargaining in the public sector, especially in the University of Panama. In CONTUA, we are fighting alongside ASEUPA for full freedom of association in Panama and for workers in the public sector to be paid the minimum wage.

In Colombia, we want to reiterate here again this year the need to maintain and redouble international support to Colombian trade unionists, who continue to suffer constant and systematic violations of the right to freedom of association, with attacks on their lives for having simply defended workers' interests.

In Guatemala, the situation is getting worse on a daily basis. Threats, violence, and disappearances of trade union leaders and social activists are on the increase all the time. In this context, our brothers from the University of San Carlos Workers' Union are finding it extremely difficult to organize and defend workers.

In Brazil, only yesterday, FASUBRA, the Trade Union Federation of Brazilian University Workers, organized a strike in protest of the privatization of university hospitals and the outsourcing of services, and in favour of an increase in education budgets and for a day of decent work with a fair salary.

In Chile, tension continues owing to the lack of resolution of the disputes in universities. The situation, which was brought to public attention thanks to the university students' struggle, is also relevant to trade unions. We want free public universities with universal access in Chile, and we want to exercise our trade union rights freely, with the full right to strike and to collective bargaining.

In Uruguay, our affiliates AFFUR, representing university employees and UTHC, representing hospital workers, are denouncing the fact that, within the framework of public sector collective bargaining, they have still not managed to sign their collective labour agreement, despite efforts being made to that end since 2010 and having received firm agreements from the university authorities. We demand that the Uruguayan Government make a commitment in that regard.

However, not all the facts we wish to bring to your attention are negative. We would like to congratulate the workers of the Venezuelan universities. We are proud that their representative at this session of the Conference is their chairman, Carlos Lopez, who has outlined the progress made in labour legislation in Venezuela.

We also want to highlight the progress made in Nicaragua, where the highest union representative of the university workers, Maritza Espinales, has been elected as a member of Parliament, carrying the voice of workers to the Parliament.

In Costa Rica, the Trade Union of National University Workers has, after an exemplary battle, managed to sign their collective agreement.

In Argentina, we have also managed to finalize the implementation of the first collective labour agreement. One outstanding issue which we have denounced at this forum is the implementation of 82 per cent of reference wages for male and female workers who retire, which will be an act of justice for our older generation.

In Mexico, our Trade Union of Workers of the Autonomous National University of Mexico – STUNAM – has strengthened at the institutional and political levels. It is one of the main social organizations to fly the flag high for the democratization of society and it is calling for a change in eco-

conomic and social direction to fight against the terrible inequalities experienced there.

As you have heard, we have given you a brief picture of the situation in our sector. We know these are difficult times for workers in a world in crisis, where economic neo-liberalism and political colonialism continue to put pressure on the working class and its nations.

From the trade unions, we are promoting a fairer economy from which no one is excluded and we are fighting for the end of colonialism in the world, an example of which is the British usurpation of the Islas Malvinas.

We are joining in solidarity and unity to assert our fundamental rights. We hope we can count on the support of the ILO to continue successfully in our task. We are proud of the three years of existence of CONTUA. The university workers, led by their trade union organizations, support decent work and respect for the human rights of workers in the universities of the Americas.

Original Spanish: Mr URRUTIKOETXEA (Representative, Trade Unions International Metalmining)

I would like to commend the work of the Workers of the ILO over these days.

Having said this, I would like to emphasize that it is absolutely essential that the ILO bases its work on democratic principles, without side-lining any international trade union organizations.

Our international trade union, as a member of the World Federation of Trade Unions, asks that our organization, which we believe provides the most coherent form of unionization at world level, be treated with the same respect as shown to other international trade union organizations. Otherwise, the ILO would be turning its back on its own founding principles.

As a result of the crisis of capitalism, at a global level the metal and mining sectors are facing a large number of dismissals as a result of the policies implemented by multinationals, which include relocating companies and seeking the highest possible profit to the detriment of the working conditions and wages of their workers. It is calculated that since the crisis began, around 20 million people in the metal and mining sectors have lost their jobs. However, the real figure is much higher since many workers in these sectors do not have contracts, workers' rights or social security.

We are also seeing a drop in wages. For instance, over the past three years, there has been an average 15 per cent loss in purchasing power among metalworkers in the European Union. Workers in these sectors are being asked to work longer hours and to work faster, which is having repercussions on their health. Moreover, over the past year, the global figure for accidents in these sectors is estimated at over 1 million, including all types of accidents, from fatal to minor accidents. Added to this, occupational diseases, which are often not accounted for in official statistics, also affect the health of many workers.

At the moment, we consider that workers in the metal and mining sectors are making a lot of sacrifices and we have to be clear about the fact that we are in the same struggle as other workers, despite having specific problems of our own. We therefore believe that we have to achieve political change that will lead to social change.

Many battles have been fought over the past year, but since it would be impossible to talk about them all, I would like to focus on three, due to their relevance and importance. Firstly, the struggle by our comrades in the Greek steelworks, "*Helliniki Halyvourgia*", who have been on strike for six months; the struggle of the miners in Peru, who have been subject to harsh repression, culminating in the murder, or death, of two of them; and the current struggle of the coal miners in Asturias and other nations of the Spanish State, who are holding strikes and demonstrations asking for €400 million to be invested in coal mines. They ask why, if €100 billion can be spent on the banking sector in Spain, a €400 million cannot be spent on safeguarding the jobs of these miners and why there is no money for education and health.

Add to these the struggles of workers around the world, in particular in Europe, for example in Greece, Portugal, the Basque country, Italy and the Spain State. to mention but a few.

We believe that it is also necessary to denounce the criminalization of union action, which is occurring throughout the world, not just in America and Africa, but in Europe as well. This is prevalent among right-wing governments, such as the People's Party (PP) Government in Spain, which threatened to abolish the right to strike after the general strike of 29 March. Furthermore, a number of people were arrested after participating in this strike.

I would like to conclude by remembering all of those workers who, over the past year, have seen their rights undermined or have lost their jobs. I would also like to express our solidarity with all those workers who have suffered the curse of accidents at work. Lastly I would like to express my solidarity and admiration for all those militant unionists throughout the world, who have been the victims of human rights violations, have been repressed or imprisoned for the crime of merely defending a fairer world for humanity at large.

We see this occurring across the world and also in Europe. In my country, the Basque Country, a trade union leader, Rafa Díez Usabiaga, has been imprisoned for his political and unionist activity, even though the Basque trade-union majority has called for his release. We think that we have a duty to denounce these situations because if it were not for the struggle of thousands of workers around the world, we would be in an even worse position today. What we want to do is change the world for the better, for the benefit of the large majority, in other words, the working majority.

Original Spanish: Mr RIVAS (Representative, Latin American Union of Municipal Workers)

First of all, on behalf of the Latin American Union of Municipal Workers (UNLAMUN), we are proud to be here today and are grateful for the invitation to take part in this Conference and share our experiences during this new session of this Conference, marked by the wealth of topics it has discussed.

The Latin American Union of Municipal Workers is made up of 20 national trade union organizations from Latin America and the Caribbean. It was founded back in 1994 and has been actively involved in all municipal work-related activities ever since. We have therefore decided to speak here on the reduction of poverty to achieve a fair globaliza-

tion and generate productive and decent work opportunities for men and women under conditions of freedom, security and human dignity.

We have come here, where public servants play a fundamental role, to reaffirm the need for better working conditions for all Latin American municipal workers, the moral obligation of collective bargaining, trade unions that are strong and need to be strengthened; and also to ask for the implementation of decent work.

We are convinced that quality public services are necessary to build just and inclusive societies, where all the people may enjoy equal access to services and equal opportunities. The Argentinean trade union model ensures the univocal will of workers within a framework of freedom and a plan to action to reduce the gender gap.

As to the priorities of our organization, we disagree with and therefore denounce an apparent wave of restrictive labour legislation that has been imposed throughout the American continent, where new laws continue to seriously limit the rights of millions of municipal workers with respect to collective bargaining, strikes and even mere affiliation with trade unions.

Other problems affecting municipal workers have been caused by bureaucratic structures, a lack of democracy within trade unions, privatization of and giving administration rights over public services.

Looking at the state of working conditions allows us to demonstrate the gravity of the situation and fully condemn the continued and systematic violations of workers' rights in Colombia and Ecuador. We therefore urge this international Organization to adopt stringent measures to protect union leaders' personal safety and allow them to freely exercise their right to freedom of association. There are also disputes in trade union representation in Central America and there are violations of trade union rights in certain municipalities, for example El Salvador.

We condemn the plunder which affected the Chilean municipal workers and those from other countries within the AFP and AFJP systems, and in other countries with other names, which gave the workers no alternative but to pay into these systems, thus eliminating the pay-as-you-go system.

With the speculation in international capital and the drop in funds, all the workers suffered considerable losses which particularly affected lifelong pensions, since average pensions in Chile would be around \$167, an amount that signifies absolute lifelong poverty for the municipal workers of Chile.

In Paraguay, only 30 out of 228 municipalities have workers' organizations. There is major partisan political interference in the municipalities with rampant neoliberalism.

How can one talk about trade unions to a worker who does not have anything to eat or any basic guarantees such as social security? Trade unions were weak in Paraguay, because of 35 years of dictatorship. The new Government has the political will to set up round tables for dialogue.

In spite of the good trade union legislation in Argentina, the fact is that there is a lack of national municipal joint boards, and a lack of collective labour agreements in the municipal sector, given that Argentine municipal workers urgently wish to set an index-linked minimum living wage in accordance with what the national Government and the

CGT agreed upon, but which is not applicable to municipal workers.

It appears that we, the municipal workers, cannot be treated in the same way as sister trade unions that do have national joint boards.

We reaffirm the importance of working within a programme implemented by municipal workers, the public administration and the state administration; personal, community and social services; the health care sector and basic distribution services.

We firmly believe that we must demand the inalienable rights of the municipal workers of the Americas and participate actively in the campaign in favour of high-quality public services from a decent work perspective.

In the absence of decent working conditions, a civil service career path, better wages, optimal infrastructure and training, it will be impossible for the people and the world to obtain high-quality public services.

*Original Portuguese: Mr LOPÉS DE CARVALHO
(Representative, Trade Unions International of Workers of the
Building, Wood and Building Materials Industries)*

Allow me on behalf of the UITBB, an organization affiliated with the World Federation of Trade Unions, to address you. This 101st Session of the Conference is being held at a time when employers' organizations and governments, especially here in Europe, are attempting to undermine the acquired historical rights of workers. All of this is incompatible with the fundamental principles of the ILO, and especially the Declaration of Philadelphia, and contrary to decent work with the rights defined by the ILO. The intention of the employers to weaken the right to strike must be rejected by the ILO. No worker and no organization representing workers can relinquish the only tool of last resort available to workers seeking to exercise their rights in their negotiations with employers. The sector of building construction and lumber is characterized by very low salaries; informal, precarious and hazardous work with no social protection or proper training; outsourcing with numerous intermediaries, leading to the loss of acquired rights; and forced competition between workers, with adverse consequences for humanity, namely, social dumping, marginalization, racism and xenophobia. This is unfortunately a daily reality for tens of millions of workers. Furthermore, in developed countries, the acquired rights of workers are now being withdrawn by capitalist institutions such as the "Troika" consisting of the European Union, the International Monetary Fund and the European Central Bank, with unprecedented structural violence and technocratic indifference.

As a representative of workers, I must mention the struggle against fatal accidents and serious injuries, and the corrective measures that need to be implemented together with the ILO so that no worker is killed or loses his health in the workplace. It must be made clear that accidents don't just happen. Consequently, the UITBB calls upon the ILO to adopt an ongoing and wide-ranging worldwide campaign against workplace accidents and occupational diseases, especially in order to advance towards a global ban on asbestos.

Moreover, women workers have embarked on a struggle against all forms of inequality. Indeed, they have called for the promotion and implementation of the four most important Conventions in the area

of equality, namely, Conventions Nos 100, 111, 156 and 183, which provide specific guidelines for the activities of ACTRAV with a view to enabling women to attain their objectives.

An unemployment rate of 40 per cent among young workers is unsustainable. Governments must reform the economy not to benefit the banks but to “ensure a just share of the fruits of progress” and make the “greatest contribution to the common well-being”. These are the words of the Declaration of Philadelphia. But in order to advance along these lines, we must eradicate the capitalist and neoliberal

policies of many governments, which are contrary to ILO Conventions. The ILO must be an organization which promotes the rights of workers.

Lastly, the ILO must defend its fundamental principles, such as trade union pluralism and the treatment of all workers’ representatives on an equal footing. The UITBB considers that the world today needs a strong and independent ILO so that it can have a real and positive impact on the living conditions of workers all over the world.

(The Conference adjourned at 7.50 p.m.)

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