



Fifth sitting

Thursday, 9 June 2011, 10.15 a.m.

Presidents: Mr Nkili and Mr Hernández Sánchez

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

Original French: The PRESIDENT

We shall begin our work with the first report of the Selection Committee which you will find in the *Provisional Record* No. 3. I invite the Worker Vice-Chairperson of this Committee, Sir Roy Trotman, to present this report to us.

Mr TROTMAN (*Worker, Barbados, Vice-Chairperson of the Selection Committee*)

Unfortunately, the Chairperson of this Committee, the representative from the Islamic Republic of Iran, was called back to his country on urgent family business and, in his absence, it is my honour, as Worker Vice-Chairperson, to present the Committee's first report, which was published on Monday this week in *Provisional Record* No. 3.

As you know, the Selection Committee is responsible for the organization of the Conference's work, and the report in *Provisional Record* No. 3 sets out a number of decisions taken by the Committee that concern the day-to-day functioning of the committees and of the plenary. I should add that the Committee, after its first meeting, delegates its authority to its Officers – that is to say, the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons – and we have met on several occasions and will continue to meet for the duration of the Conference to make sure all goes smoothly.

The Committee decided that the discussion of the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General would begin on Wednesday, 8 June at 10.00 a.m., and that the list of speakers would close the same day at 6 p.m.

The Committee also put in place the framework for the discussion of this year's Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, *Equality at work: The continuing challenge*, in the form of an interactive panel discussion, followed by interactive discussions on the basis of the ad hoc arrangements set out in Appendix I. This discussion will take place tomorrow afternoon.

It endorsed the tentative plan of work for the Conference, which is reproduced in Appendix II of the report. This may of course be modified by the Officers of the Committee as needed during our work.

In order to facilitate the debates held by the Committee for the Recurrent Discussion on Social Protection (Social Security), the Selection Committee authorized in advance the transmission to that

Committee of any information from, or outcome adopted by, the Committee on the Application of Standards on its consideration of the *General Survey concerning social security instruments*. This decision was taken with a view to following up on the Governing Body's decision to align the General Surveys drawn up on the basis of article 19 reports with the recurrent discussion items.

The Selection Committee was asked to consider a draft resolution concerning gender equality and the use of language in legal texts of the ILO, together with a proposed editor's note to attach to the Constitution of the ILO on the same subject. After some minor adjustments of translation, the Committee invited the Conference to adopt the draft proposed resolution, which you will see is reproduced in Appendix IV to the report, and you are asked to take note of the editor's note, which is in Appendix V.

The Committee took a number of decisions concerning the Governing Body elections, which as you now know were held successfully on Monday of this week. It reviewed a number of requests for representation in Conference committees by international non-governmental organizations, and approved the lists that had been submitted to it by the Governing Body and it confirmed a range of principles aimed at facilitating the work of the Conference.

Finally, it appointed a Conference Drafting Committee, constituted as set out in section 12 of the report.

Those are the matters which we felt should be reported to the Conference. I therefore do not intend to prolong this presentation beyond thanking the Chairperson of the Committee and my fellow Vice-Chairperson for the dedication and consensual spirit with which they have approached our work, and I commend the first report of the Selection Committee to the Conference for approval.

Original French: The PRESIDENT

If there are no objections, may I consider that the Conference agrees with the decisions taken on behalf of the Conference in this first report, and that it approves the report, paragraphs 1–14, as well as Appendices I, II and III?

(The report – paragraphs 1–14 and its Appendices I–III – is approved.)

**RESOLUTION CONCERNING GENDER EQUALITY AND
THE USE OF LANGUAGE IN LEGAL TEXTS OF THE ILO:
ADOPTION**

Original French: The PRESIDENT

I would also ask the Conference to adopt a draft resolution on gender equality and the use of language in legal texts of the ILO. This is the resolution contained in Appendix IV. May I consider that there are no objections and that the resolution is adopted?

(The resolution is adopted.)

DRAFT PROPOSED EDITOR'S NOTE

Original French: The PRESIDENT

Lastly, the Conference is called upon to take note of Appendix V, containing the draft proposed editor's note which the Office will have to add to the Constitution of the ILO.

(The draft proposed editor's note is noted.)

Now, before we continue our meeting, I should like to inform you that the result of the elections to the Governing Body of the International Labour Office for the period 2011–14 which took place on Monday, 6 June, may be found in the *Provisional Record* No. 8.

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

Original French: The PRESIDENT

We shall now continue with the discussion of the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General.

Original Spanish: Mr DÍAZ (*Worker, Chile*)

The 100th Session of the International Labour Conference is a milestone for international tripartism and it is very important to note that, despite political events at the international level, tripartism has always continued to function. Dialogue is a powerful tool for social peace, in particular at a time when the effects of the crisis are still being felt in a great many member States and many are trying to boost their economic recovery. Emerging countries, such as Chile, were not too badly affected by the crisis and have maintained economic growth rates and falling unemployment.

However, our country has a high concentration of wealth – the richest 20 per cent of Chile's inhabitants hold 80 per cent of the national wealth. In addition, Chilean society is marked by grave inequality and is fragmented, with a high proportion of the population living in severe poverty.

How can it be that a country like Chile, which has experienced steady growth for over two decades now, is opposed to redistributing wealth, amending its labour legislation and introducing mechanisms to ensure greater social equality?

Forty per cent of the Chilean workforce works without social protection, due to the quantity of atypical labour contracts which have been imposed and more than 20 per cent work without contracts, living in poverty, as far as social security is concerned.

Governments and employers all justify this state of affairs with their pro-employment discourse but

the jobs that are created are far from being decent employment. They are encouraging a situation whereby people are kept in work, although sometimes only for a few hours, on a wage that does not allow them to live in dignity.

Flexible employment policies are designed to provide enterprises with everything they require in order to produce and do business, while ensuring that the workforce is permanently in a state of need and therefore ready to accept working conditions that favour employers.

One example of this phenomenon is the transnational enterprise Walmart, the world's largest retailer. It has now set up shop in Chile and operates in an arbitrary fashion when it comes to dealing with its workers, treating them differently from one another. It recognizes the rights of some and denies those of others. We call on the Government to keep its electoral promises, to change the whole concept of enterprise and to put an end to the schemes of multi-RUT enterprises established under a variety of different names.

The broken promises affect the credibility of political leaders and the authorities and explain why our Government is currently so unpopular. Chile is always proud to promote its economic successes, and democratic advances. However, it is unwilling to do the same with regard to its inadequate and outdated labour legislation. This ensures that workers remain excluded and without rights. The unionization rate is not higher than 12 per cent and less than 6.5 per cent of workers engage in collective bargaining. However, Chile has been accepted as a member of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and its authorities eagerly proclaim that Chile is a successful country. In its recent report, the OECD ranks Chile next to last in terms of quality of life in its list of 34 member countries.

Chile neither recognizes nor respects labour rights. In one case, a number of municipal employees have been denied the pay rise due to them since 1981 which would help them maintain their income levels.

We call on the Government of Chile to follow the recommendations of the Committee of Experts to change the social security system, which is not currently in line with some of the basic principles set out by the ILO.

The workers need a new labour agreement, an institutional tool that will ensure genuine freedom of association and more and better collective bargaining. We also need a State with the will to carry out inspection activities and establish fair labour relations that respect the rights of all the workers.

We embrace the slogan of this Conference "Building a future with decent work" but in the interests of the environment, and like the vast majority of Chileans, we reject the form and way in which the Government approved the hydroelectric project which will affect Chilean Patagonia.

Last of all, the Single Federation of Workers (CUT) would like to pay tribute at this Conference to the memory of our comrade, María Rozas Velásquez (R.I.P.), who left us last April. She was a member of the ILO Governing Body and a historic leader of our trade union federation, a tireless fighter for gender rights, in particular those of women. Thank you very much.

Looking back at history, the ILO has made systematic efforts to improve the working conditions and, by extension, the lives of workers all over the world. Much has been achieved, but a lot remains to be done, especially regarding discrimination in the workplace, which may be based on gender, work and family responsibilities, maternity and paternity protection, sexual harassment, migrant status, religion, class or disabilities.

With regard to age discrimination, 58 per cent of Europeans consider that age discrimination is widespread in their country; as many as 64 per cent expect that the economic crisis will lead to an increase in discrimination, especially against older workers.

Young people also face hurdles to employment; many are unable to find suitable employment after completing their education or training. This is also a challenge for the trade union movement. Active job creation and a good employment policy created by governments, in cooperation with social partners, could assist in reducing youth unemployment.

The most persistent discrimination challenge, however, is gender discrimination. Lack of gender equality affects more than 50 per cent of the global population. This is the most important reason for keeping this issue high on the agenda. But there is also a gender dimension in all the other areas of discrimination mentioned.

Despite significant progress being made in recent decades in ensuring gender equality in working life, major challenges remain. Women, who constitute more than 50 per cent of the global population, continue to suffer from discrimination in terms of the jobs available to them, benefits and working conditions, access to decision-making bodies and equal pay for work of equal value. The pay gap still exists, despite better education among women, and women continue to be over-represented in low-income jobs. Recent data show that 829 million women live in poverty worldwide, while the equivalent figure for men is 522 million.

I will now give some comments on the situation in the Middle East and North Africa. In this region, people have protested against undemocratic regimes, the high cost of living, and unemployment. The protests, which started in Tunisia, have spread to most countries in the region. In Tunisia, the trade union movement has been at the forefront of demands for democracy and human and labour rights. The same is happening in Bahrain. The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions expresses its deep concern about the Government's attack on the trade union movement in Bahrain. Thousands of workers and elected trade union leaders have been dismissed for participating in peaceful demonstrations. In addition, the leadership of the General Federation of Bahraini Trade Unions has been accused of leading a conspiracy to overthrow the regime. The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions fully supports the trade union movement in Bahrain. We appeal to the Government of Bahrain to stop harassing the trade unionists and to enter into dialogue with the trade union movement.

The recent changes in the Arab world could make a new framework for negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis possible. The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions welcomes the reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas, because the

Palestinian people's unity is a crucial element for achieving peace.

We appeal to the United Nations and the Middle East Quartet to do everything possible to get the peace process back on track. If no solution is reached quickly, a Palestinian State should receive international recognition during the United Nations General Assembly in September.

The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions supports the Israeli peace activists who demonstrated in Tel Aviv, Israel, last Saturday, in support of having two States.

Original Russian: Mr ALAKBAROV (Minister of Labour and Social Protection, Azerbaijan)

The questions discussed at this session of the Conference are a clear demonstration of the ILO's commitment to social justice. This is an authoritative international organization which, despite the international crisis, has been able to preserve its values to achieve social justice and equality.

The international crisis has affected Azerbaijan's economic growth. However, the country's political and macroeconomic stability and its effective regulation of social and economic processes have mitigated the negative effects of the crisis, and the country has managed to maintain robust GDP growth and implement state programmes for social and economic development.

It is well known that even with high levels of growth, the risk of unemployment and poverty is considerable. We have adopted active and targeted measures to improve social assistance, boost employment, improve education and training, and reduce informal sector employment. These policies have been based on international legal standards including ILO Conventions ratified by Azerbaijan, and preclude the possibility of discrimination in employment and access to social services.

The social reforms that we have carried out in our country have been aimed at achieving adequate GDP growth. Over the last three years, the level of unemployment in our country has been reduced from 6.1 per cent to 5.6 per cent. The level of poverty has been reduced from 13.2 per cent to 9.1 per cent. Over the last seven years, we have created some 930,000 jobs, 71.8 per cent of which are permanent jobs. According to the evaluation of international experts, we have achieved a 90 per cent targeting level for social assistance. Over the last seven years we have built over more than 40 per cent of all of the schools and hospitals that exist in our country.

Our main priority is youth development and we believe that investment in youth is investment in our future. We need to ensure that there is proper education and a role for youth in the democracy of our country. This has been the basis of the project which was adopted under a presidential decree on "Youth of Azerbaijan 2011–15".

A priority of government policy in female employment is creating the necessary conditions to increase the competitive advantages of women, and allowing them to combine their roles as mothers and as workers.

In addition, on the basis of the UN Convention of the Rights of Disabled Persons, we are taking active measures to integrate disabled people into society.

The liberalization of our economy, the increase of investment flows and increasing tolerance, and a lack of ethnic racial and religious discrimination,

have led to increasing migration, including labour migration into our country. Protection of the rights of migrants is ensured in accordance with the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of Migrants and Members of their Families, which has been ratified by Azerbaijan.

Development of social policies has involved the active participation of the social partners, NGOs and civil society representatives. A public council has been set up by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection to pursue these initiatives. Our achievements in the sphere of social development have been noted by the United Nations, the World Bank, the Council of Europe, and other international organizations and structures.

According to the UNDP report of 2005–10, we have moved up in terms of our human development index from 101st place to 67th place.

I must, on the other hand, draw your attention to the fact that, despite the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and the Council of Europe with regard to Armenia's violation of the Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, we still face the problem of finding employment and social amenities for more than 1 million refugees and forced migrants. The long-continued failure to resolve the conflict should be considered as discrimination against that population group, and as an infringement of their right to freely chosen employment in the territory in which they reside.

The social policy that we have chosen demonstrates that the Government's policy to develop a socially oriented market economy has produced results. Hand in hand with this, we still believe that only comprehensive and interlinked measures to address problems of equality in employment will produce results both at the national and at the global level.

Original Arabic: Mr FAKHRI (Minister of Labour, Saudi Arabia)

I would like to congratulate the ILO for organizing this 100th Session, which reflects its pioneering and pivotal role among international organizations.

The Director-General, Mr Somavia, in his eloquent Report to the Conference, has called for the creation of a "new paradigm" based on decent work in the globalized economy, and we agree. Decent work for all is a goal we strongly share. There is no doubt that a great deal of effort is required to reach this objective. Through our partnership with the International Labour Organization and within the context of the G20, we will be working together to achieve greater justice, stability and prosperity throughout the world.

The task of achieving full employment and the eradication of the causes of unemployment is one of the most important priorities for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, where the Government is seeking to improve the productivity of the Saudi worker through education and training. At the same time the Saudi labour market remains open to millions of foreign workers who also contribute side by side with national workers in order to achieve our various development goals and meet the temporary needs of the national economy at its various stages of development. To this end, we have implemented a number of measures in order to improve the work environment, labour productivity, employment stability, justice and transparency.

The following are some of the most important measures carried out by the Kingdom with the aim of developing the labour market.

In the area of labour organizations, approval has been given for the creation of a National Committee for the Workers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which includes in its membership all the existing elected workers' committees. The National Committee will help stimulate the creation of more labour committees and promote tripartite dialogue in freedom and independence.

In the area of e-services, the Saudi Ministry of Labour has started implementing an advanced electronic system to provide various services for workers and employers. This system contributes to greater efficiency and transparency at the domestic level and supports better communication with the sending countries.

In the area of social protection, in pursuit of social protection, a programme has been launched to help the unemployed during their job search. Another programme is being developed to provide insurance against unemployment for those who have lost their jobs. These two programmes will provide job-seekers with the necessary income until they find a job that suits their qualifications and aspirations.

In the area of equal pay, the application of equal pay in the Kingdom is a legal principle affirmed in all domestic legislation, and we are implementing it strictly.

In the field of regulating the relationship between foreign workers and employers, a ministerial decree regulating the creation of large companies to handle the hiring of foreign workers has been issued. These companies will be responsible for providing a proper work environment, in addition to ensuring foreign workers' financial well-being and human rights. This initiative is of particular importance for domestic and low-skilled workers.

In the area of wage protection, the Ministry is currently developing an advanced electronic system for wage protection in order to monitor the payment of wages and salaries for national and foreign workers through the banking system. The system will help ensure that salaries and wages are being paid on time, which will reduce potential labour disputes and disagreements. The Ministry of Labour is also working to establish a toll-free hotline in multiple languages to facilitate communication, provide the necessary information and help reach appropriate solutions to the problems encountered.

Finally, before concluding, I would like to emphasize the important role this Organization is playing to support Palestinian workers in obtaining their legitimate rights to access suitable job opportunities that allow for a safe and decent life.

Ms CHARALAMBOUS (Minister of Labour and Social Insurance, Cyprus)

As we celebrate the 100th Session of the International Labour Conference, the Report of the Director-General, *A new era of social justice*, places some critical issues before us.

Given that most countries have experienced a period of intense economic crisis, the biggest crisis since the Great Depression of 1930, and are in the process of recovery from the crisis, the time has come to decide the direction of our subsequent steps. We welcome the Report of the Director-General, which clearly outlines the current state of affairs in the fields of economics, employment and

social protection, and lays down the ILO's position on how we should move forward from here.

In the last few decades, the economic policy we have followed has resulted in an unbalanced and unequal globalization. The strength of the market and its ability to self-regulate was overestimated, the importance of the role of the State, of public policies and regulations was downgraded, decent work, social services, and social welfare policies were reduced.

To avoid the risk of repeating past mistakes, it is essential to construct a new growth model. We need the kind of growth where success is not only evaluated in proportion to GDP, but in a more comprehensive and balanced manner, that takes into account the human dimension of growth. It is obvious that on a global, regional and local level, we need to restore the balance between fiscal policies, employment policies and social policies.

The Director-General aptly states in his Report that we should at all costs avoid slipping back to "business as usual". An effective way out of the crisis involves a range of interventions. We need sustainable growth, based on sound macroeconomic policies and a high level of investment in sectors of the economy which respect decent work and the environment. We need balanced fiscal policies that will not lead to growing inequalities.

In the field of employment, the principles and values of the Decent Work Agenda and the Global Jobs Pact are more relevant now than ever. The Social Protection Floor Initiative and the Millennium Development Goals provide a framework for drawing up and developing policies based on social justice.

Coherent economic, social, and financial, employment and wage policies can contribute towards sustainable economic growth and social justice, and need to be ensured.

Social cohesion is another critical issue on which we should focus. It is a fundamental determinant of whether people will benefit from globalization and change, and whether they can be protected from the associated risks. Social protection is not to be viewed as the end result of growth, but as a prerequisite. When growth marginalizes people and increases inequalities, it is anything but growth.

It is obvious that we need a new era of social justice. For this era to come about, it is paramount that all of us commit to the principles upon which the ILO was founded. Social dialogue, tripartite cooperation, respect for the right to organize and bargain collectively are now the only road that can lead to social and economic balance. Policy coherence and synergy within countries needs to be complemented by improved coherence between international bodies.

We applaud the effort that brought the ILO and the IMF together, in order to improve the integration of employment and social policies with international macroeconomic policy strategies. We urge the ILO to seek out further partnerships, in order to ensure better policy coordination and promote the strengthening of fundamental principles and rights at work.

The Government of the Republic of Cyprus fully supports the Director-General's Report. We are facing the same problems and the same challenges as many other member States across the European Union and the rest of the world – increased unemployment, fiscal problems and a greater level of in-

security on the labour market. We are working towards solving all the problems that the crisis has brought to the surface.

The Government will continue to fight inequalities in all the major areas of the world of work – employment, wages and incomes and working conditions. At the same time, we will continue our efforts to design policies based on an integrated approach that makes people the centre of growth.

Let me conclude by saying that, for the Government of the Republic of Cyprus, the promotion of fundamental principles and rights at work is linked to our efforts to find a just and viable solution to the Cyprus problem, a solution that will unite the people, the economy, the land and the institutions of Cyprus and will lay down the foundations for increased growth for all Cypriots.

Original Spanish: Mr ALVEAR (Employer, Chile)

Over the years, the Confederation of Production and Trade has been a privileged witness to how the International Labour Organization and the fundamental values it promotes have remained fully valid. The ILO is the forum par excellence for tripartism and the highest body for social dialogue at the global level. We hope, therefore, that you will continue with the successes of these important annual meetings, which clearly reflect how, with respect and will, agreements can always be drafted that satisfy all.

In relation to my country, Chile, I would like to say that the labour market is going through a very special period because, ever since the terrible earthquake that hit our country in 2010, society as a whole has made and continues to make significant efforts to get back on its feet and move forward towards a better future.

After this disaster, social actors, workers, employers and the Government set their sights high and were able to draft tripartite agreements to defend jobs and productive activity, reiterating the commitment that we had made not long before, when the international financial crisis of 2009 was seen to present a threat to jobs and production.

The outcome of all of these efforts can be measured in terms of jobs. Jobs were created as a result of the earthquake, because it meant that the country had to urgently rebuild its infrastructure and productive capacity, which of course led to greater demand for labour. Naturally, this was also the result of public policies promoting hiring that the Government has implemented. As such, unemployment has dropped substantially: between February and April 2011, it was only 7 per cent; we have created more than 450,000 jobs within one year, which is a record for our society.

Chilean pension funds, which are based on a system of individual capitalization, managed to grow despite the international financial crisis of 2009, and they have now all recovered their full pre-crisis value. They are continuing to contribute to the country's development, enabling our economy to post growth rates that, this year, will exceed 6 per cent.

However, as a country we still have major disparities in terms of the employment of women and young people. The presence of women in the labour market has gradually been increased, but our indicators on female employment rates show that we are far behind other OECD member States and many of our Latin American neighbours.

The youth unemployment rate is also extremely high; almost three times higher than unemployment in the rest of the economy.

In addition to those two situations, there is a third issue, namely improving the coverage and quality of labour-market training, which is, after all, workers' main asset and the key element in allowing companies to develop in a sustainable manner in an increasingly competitive world.

It is with regard to these three aspects that we believe social actors and the Government should make their best efforts to improve our people's quality of life and potential for future growth.

For companies, the country's development is very important and good entrepreneurs always contribute to this development. Their vision and commitment paves the way for new opportunities for growth and the well-being that it brings. However, anybody who founds a company knows that a great many elements are required to make sure it can grow and flourish. The people who work in a company are its most important assets and must be protected, because it is only on the basis of the commitment and talent of those people that the company can grow on a solid basis.

Current labour legislation in Chile is constantly evolving and being adapted to new aspects of productive activity and the various trends that increase well-being at work. However, the figures for today and yesterday clearly show that a lot needs to be done to create jobs in the most vulnerable sectors of our economy.

The obligations and needs of every woman and young person are different, so labour legislation must recognize the value for the country if they can work according to their education and training and around their other commitments. Nothing enhances people's dignity more than having opportunities to work and develop their skills.

We feel that it will always be important to have labour legislation discussions during periods of strong economic growth and when, as a result, employment is low, but we have to be cautious not to introduce legal provisions that would be unsustainable in less favourable economic cycles, with the high social costs that such cycles involve.

Because of this, and in this framework, we advocate tripartite social dialogue and call on Worker and Government representatives to ensure that we can continue to work with concrete proposals to ensure that more women and young people have job opportunities in our country. Accordingly, we would have to be capable of recognizing the existence of factors that do not currently enhance better integration into the labour market of these sectors of our population and of considering that the fairest ways of dealing with these sectors of the population might be by recognizing that differentiated treatment or systems open up opportunities for them, thereby ensuring full respect of their labour rights.

I would just like to reiterate, in this high-level forum of tripartism and social dialogue, the commitment of the Confederation of Production and Trade to developing all of its efforts to ensure the necessary dialogue for achieving, together, full economic and social development with work opportunities for all.

Original Polish: Mr GUZ (Worker, Poland)

The current 100th Session of the International Labour Conference is an exceptional event. For the

100th time, the Government, Employer and Worker representatives are seeking solutions to social and economic problems that are crucial for the world of labour.

Once again, we are contributing to the rich history of the International Labour Organization by approving principles for international labour standards and ensuring that those principles are put into practice. For the trade union movement all over the world, the most important of these standards and principles are those contained in the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98).

Unfortunately, these extremely important Conventions have not been ratified by a large number of countries, including those that aspire to teach us democracy. It is worth noting that more than half of the workers in the world do not enjoy the right to freedom of association.

I am speaking at this Conference in my capacity as the Worker delegate from Poland, one of the founding member States of the International Labour Organization. Over the centuries, the Poles have experienced much injustice. The idea of social solidarity and social protection for the most vulnerable is therefore very important to us.

The economic crisis we have experienced has served to remind us that the foundations of the current socio-economic system are extremely fragile. Risky financial speculation by small groups of bankers led to a recession, resulting in a rise in unemployment and poverty, as well as many human tragedies. Governments and employers are proposing draconian austerity policies in order to tackle the problem, which will hurt ordinary citizens, worsen poverty and lower living standards. The Governments, instead of increasing the scope of social expenditure, in order to foster socio-economic development, are targeting the field of social policy for tough spending cuts.

Social protection provides a tool to mitigate the effects of the crisis. It is a fundamental human right that helps to reduce the uncertainty which follows any loss of income, health problems or disability. Unfortunately, as is clear from the Director-General's Report, around 80 per cent of the world population has no access to basic social protection. We cannot accept this as the norm and continue with "business as usual".

Unemployment poses one of the most serious challenges for the world of labour. It is a basic cause of poverty, social exclusion and the ever-growing gulf between the rich and the poor, as Mr Somavia correctly pointed out in his opening address. We are particularly concerned that the army of unemployed is mainly made up of young people, including a large number of well-educated graduates. The level of unemployment benefit which should, in theory, provide means of survival, is very low in Poland and covers only about 20 per cent of the unemployed. In Poland, the average monthly unemployment benefit is equal to two-thirds of the minimum living level.

It is estimated that approximately one third of the unemployed have an income that falls below the subsistence level. It is not hard to imagine the poverty in which the unemployed and their families are forced to live. At the moment, even a job cannot guarantee an escape from poverty for workers. As

we can see, the number of working poor continues to grow.

Despite the soaring cost of living, the amount of money spent on social protection has been drastically reduced. In Poland, the income thresholds for benefits have remained frozen since 2006. This means that, in order to qualify for benefits, people need to have an income that falls below the minimum subsistence level.

The International Labour Organization's main labour standards in the field of social protection provide the basis for socio-economic and social development in a globalized world. Polish trade unions have long been calling for the full ratification of the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102), in particular with regard to unemployment benefit. In this context, it is also crucial to ratify the Employment Promotion and Protection against Unemployment Convention, 1988 (No. 168). We need to work together to ensure that the abovementioned Conventions are ratified and properly implemented all over the world.

In order to ensure that these Conventions are adopted, it is necessary to engage in social dialogue. Mr Somavia stressed that all the delegates gathered at this Conference share the conviction that social dialogue, rather than violence or war, provides the means to solve the problems we face, and we all agree that the standards that we approve here are extremely important. Such convictions form the basis of the ILO's existence. However, as the Director-General pointed out in his opening speech, the belief in the strength of social dialogue must now move from the international organization to the national level. I am convinced that these standards will also be translated into practice in Poland.

Original Arabic: Mr AL DAJANI (Government, Jordan)

The global economy is still suffering from the aftermath of the global financial crisis, with declining real growth, resulting in an economic recession affecting labour markets, job losses and a sharp increase in layoffs in many countries, reaching levels which have not been seen for decades. Wages are declining, along with increasing labour disputes. In this context, reports issued by the ILO and other international and regional organizations continue to warn of the persistent effects of the economic crisis on all of the countries of the world, in particular the developing countries. The figures show that the impact of the crisis has pushed many people in the developing and least developed countries into a cycle of poverty.

This year's session of the Conference is focusing on a number of subjects, chief among them decent work for domestic workers and labour inspection, which call for discussion and dialogue at the highest international and regional levels, in order to improve the conditions for decent work, increase employment and create an appropriate work environment.

My country has pursued its efforts focusing on the work of domestic workers, who are now included in the scope of the Labour Code, No. 8 of 1996, as of 2009. To that end, regulations have been issued on domestic workers, cooks, gardeners and similar workers. Regulations have also been issued on private offices recruiting foreign domestic workers, as well as the conditions and procedures for the recruitment and employment of non-Jordanians and the amendments thereto.

As regards labour inspection, my country has provided for training of labour inspectors in order to regulate the labour market, create an appropriate work environment and ensure proper compliance with labour law.

As regards cooperation between Jordan and the ILO, I would like to thank the Organization for its support, in particular with regard to forced labour and social dialogue, and stress the need for further technical assistance in the areas of labour inspection, in particular with regard to domestic workers, child labour, and capacity building in the Ministry in the areas of employment and training.

We would also like to thank the Director-General for his Report on the situation of the workers of the occupied Arab territories. The Report confirms that no real improvement in the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories can take place unless the restrictions imposed by the Israeli occupation, and the occupation itself, are removed. The Report also states clearly that the measures undertaken by the Palestinian Authority have brought it to a point beyond which economic and employment growth is not feasible if the conditions of occupation are not dismantled.

In the preface to his Report, the Director-General says that this year, the situation has regrettably not changed with respect to last year, and recalls that settlements are the primary cause of the depletion of natural resources and confiscation of Arab land, restrictions on access and movement, territorial fragmentation, planning policies that impede Arab development, and violent acts by Israeli settlers. The Report states that the multitude of restrictions faced by workers and entrepreneurs in the West Bank, including eastern Al-Quds, and the occupied Syrian Golan deprive the Palestinian people and the Syrian citizens of the occupied Syrian Golan of the opportunity to seek and obtain employment and prosperity in accordance with the freedom and rights enshrined in the Constitution of the ILO.

As regards the situation in Gaza, the Director-General made it clear that unless the complete closure of Gaza is lifted, the economic and social fabric of Gaza will further disintegrate.

In conclusion, I wish this Conference every success and look forward to further fruitful cooperation between Jordan and the ILO.

Original Portuguese: Mr PITRA NETO (Minister of Public Administration, Employment and Social Security, Angola)

The Republic of Angola shares the vision and objectives set out in the Report on equality at work. Both the Constitution of the Republic, approved in 2010, and our national legislation establish principles and basic rights which guarantee the dignity and freedom of all citizens, regardless of their social condition, gender, ethnic background, religion, race and political, philosophical or ideological beliefs.

Despite the devastating effects of the war which ravaged our country for almost three decades until the year 2002, Angolan society is facing up to the challenges of national reconciliation and re-building with realism and a great deal of pragmatism.

The Decent Work Agenda was adopted as a fundamental reference in the preparation, approval and implementation of programmes concerning vocational training, compulsory social protection and safety and health at work.

As a result of the implementation of the Agenda, Angola now has a network of vocational training

centres established in most of the major towns in the country. We have a compulsory social security system which provides a reasonable range of services. Coverage has been extended and solid funding provided. We have now begun the process of strengthening the quality of the technical capacities of our labour inspectorate. I should like to add that a new legal system governing family allowances has entered into force.

Occupational safety and health is fundamental, in particular the programme to prevent and combat HIV/AIDS in the workplace. Other essential tasks being carried out by Angola include the introduction of regulations covering domestic workers and the plan to combat child labour.

Work is ongoing to make the Decent Work Agenda a concrete reality in a world in which the future is uncertain and instability affects the economic and financial fields, as well as international security.

The Government and the social partners are working and acting together to improve institutional, legal and technical conditions, in order to attract and facilitate investment, an essential factor for growth, employment management and the improvement of the standard of living of all our citizens and communities.

Mr President, we should like to thank the ILO, in the person of its leaders, for the support and assistance it has provided my country through our Government, as well as the social partners, in particular regarding training and empowerment programmes and new draft legislation.

We should also like to extend our thanks to all those who voted for Angola to become a substitute Member of the Governing Body of the ILO.

In conclusion, allow me to wish the Conference every success. I hope that its recommendations and resolutions will contribute to the continued building of a more harmonious world, with greater solidarity, where decent work, merit, technology, innovation and increasing employment may be the permanent sign of our times.

Original Spanish: Mr BARANDA (Government, Chile)

It is an honour to be attending this ILO Conference, which provides us with a great opportunity to share with you some of our country's thoughts on the matters before us. Indeed, the Chilean Government and our President, Mr Sebastian Piñera, consider labour relations and their quality as an efficient means of building a better future for all citizens and of thus combating poverty.

First of all, I would like to pay tribute to Mrs Maria Rozas, a trade union official who died at the beginning of May after having devoted many years to the trade union movement. Maria played an important role as a trade union leader and was also a member of the Governing Body of the ILO, and a Chilean parliamentary member.

But we are not just remembering her these days; we have also been commemorating the 21st anniversary of the death of the trade union leader Clotario Blest, who was the first head of the National Association of Government Employees in Chile, who fought for trade union unity, labour and human rights. His human characteristics and spirituality deserve that we remember him now.

Today, there is a broad consensus about the challenges the labour world is faced with. We agree with Mr Juan Somavia, Director-General of the

ILO, in that the main objective of any economic policy should be to generate a virtuous circle between economic growth and decent work. Failing that, it will be very difficult to take up the challenge of creating sustainable and productive employment.

The Chilean Government has committed itself to developing a society of opportunity, in which each and every one might fulfil their aspirations, while providing guarantees so that individuals are not afraid to take risks – an intrinsic part of entrepreneurship and an inventive spirit. And this society would be based on values such as the respect of individuals, human rights and freedom, in which emphasis would not only be laid on boosting growth, productivity and employment creation, but also on an improved and more efficient social role of the State.

Chile has 17 million inhabitants, a labour force of 7 million and an unemployment rate of 7 per cent. At the beginning of this year, we were afflicted by a tsunami and the worst earthquake our country has ever experienced. Only a few months later, the country was faced with an accident in the San José mine, where 33 miners were trapped more than 700 metres underground; after an exemplary rescue mission, they were brought to the surface alive 70 days later.

In its first year, the Government of Sebastian Piñera not only had to confront the change in the coalition that had governed Chile for 20 years, but all these extraordinary events that affected his agenda.

In view of this complex situation, the Government took the responsibility of increasing the labour force by 15 per cent, creating 1 million new and quality jobs over a period of four years. We have the intention of consolidating good labour practices, promoting constructive and harmonious labour relations, strengthening rights at work and security, implementing social security reform, and also giving a boost to competitiveness and productivity, so that we can return to growth rates of above 6 per cent – as they were before.

As regards occupational safety and health, the Government has decided to re-establish the value of life, as well as the health and safety of workers and employers.

Our Government has ratified the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187). It also appointed a tripartite committee, which travelled the country collecting opinions and suggestions from workers, trade union officials and anyone wishing to give their opinion; it also established tripartite dialogue centres in 15 regions in the country. At present, statutory reforms are being considered, on the basis of these findings, which will ultimately form a national policy on these issues.

As for vocational training, the Government has taken up the challenge to provide 5 million people with new jobs in four financial years, with a total investment of US\$500 million per year. It has also set up a panel of experts to identify the most efficient and relevant programmes to guarantee better employability and productivity. We are also extending and strengthening the system of certification of labour competencies.

We are committed to fully respecting the standards and principles of labour relations and we have therefore embarked upon modernizing labour inspection and are looking into procedures of the labour inspectorate.

In line with the social pillar advocated by the ILO, the Government of Chile has created an “ethical income” for families, which guarantees a minimum income for the most disadvantaged Chilean families.

I should like to conclude with a few words on our pension system. Our individual pension capitalization scheme has now been working for 30 years. It has been successfully developed and perfected throughout three decades with different Governments, of varying political leanings in charge. Workers now have control over their own funds and profitability is 10 per cent above inflation. All Chileans have been assured of a quality pension.

Our Government will continue promoting public policies which: place individuals at the forefront; generate more and better jobs with sustainable companies; and ensure that productivity and development are translated into progress and the improvement of the quality of life of all Chilean workers.

Original Arabic: Mr MAJDALANI (Government, Palestinian Authority)

As you know, we are participating in the work of this Conference at a time when the Arab world is witnessing a number of democratic changes which clearly show that these peoples have opted for liberty and democracy as a means to achieve progress, construction and social peace.

The fact that this session of the International Labour Conference is being held at a time when the Arab world is in the throes of birth, a highly critical and sensitive stage with prospects for change ahead, reflects the interest and extent of the responsibility which the international community should take with regard to our Arab peoples and workers, who have long aspired to live in peace, freedom and democracy as the means of achieving dignity, safety, security and a decent livelihood.

The popular social revolutions that have occurred and are still under way in the Arab region were sparked off by certain key factors, with unemployment and poverty as the two main interrelated and interdependent factors. Given that unemployment in our countries is one of the main causes of the increase in poverty, we now find ourselves faced with challenges that call for serious, realistic integrated employment plans, programmes and policies which take the development dimension into account. We must also define our short- and long-term tasks vis-à-vis our peoples, which urgently requires expanding and supporting international cooperation in addressing the scourge of unemployment.

The Palestinian people continue to suffer the oppression of the Israeli occupation which has been afflicting our land for over half a century, in an unequal confrontation marked by daily violations, confiscation of land and rampant settlement activity, armed with an array of means of support and might, sponsored and condoned by the Israeli Government. The Palestinian people are experiencing difficult circumstances, in particular in tackling its dual mission of national liberation and building democracy, under the continuing Israeli occupation with its arbitrary settlement policies and measures, its desecration of the city of Al-Quds, and blockade of the Gaza Strip, which have thwarted the process of negotiations and brought it to a halt.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our profound appreciation for the content of the Re-

port of the Director-General on The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories, as well as his close follow-up through the fact-finding mission on the violations against Palestinian workers and citizens. The Report confirms what we have always said: that the situation resulting from the occupation is a serious violation of international law, human rights and the rights of the Palestinians; however, the most important and most dangerous problem, as the Report emphasizes, is the occupation itself. We consider that the Report is an important international document condemning the occupation and highlighting its violations of international law, human rights and workers' rights, and we invite all the delegations from the countries of the world to read it. We call for a concerted effort to end the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land, and for Israel to comply with international law and United Nations resolutions, as it is no longer acceptable, in the context of the current regional and global changes, for Israel to remain a State that is above the law, denying the rights of the Palestinians, depriving them of their very existence and preventing them from living in dignity, against the wishes of the entire world, including the United States of America, to see a Palestinian State.

Perhaps the content of US President Obama's speech calling for the establishment of a Palestinian State with the borders of 4 June 1967, and the largely positive international climate we have observed recently, including the French initiative to which we have agreed, provide a glimmer of hope to our people that the international community will support it in claiming its legitimate right to its land and, especially, to obtain recognition of the creation of an independent State with the borders of 4 June 1967 and Al-Quds as its capital, and in its application to the United Nations for full membership of the State of Palestine, which will be submitted in September this year.

From this rostrum, we ask the International Labour Organization and the international community in general, to stand by our people in support of this request, faced with the intransigence of Israel's rejection of peace. We believe in peace, and in respect for international charters and Conventions, and in providing the necessary conditions to secure a peace which is in the interests of our people, as well as others.

As part of the process of institution building and development which the Palestinian National Authority is carrying out in preparation for national independence and the creation of a free State, without settlements, I am pleased to announce that the Palestinian Ministry of Labour, together with the three social partners and in a spirit of responsibility and teamwork, has been working to develop the Palestinian labour market and design employment policies and plans and the necessary strategies to that end, in accordance with the government guidelines laid down in the National Development Plan, 2011-13.

In the light of all these visions and transformations, we hope that a genuine Arab partnership will emerge, which will help alleviate the burdens of poverty and unemployment, and enable our people to achieve freedom and democracy, to live in dignity and to create its own independent State.

Mr President, Ministers, delegates to the Conference, ladies and gentlemen. In this, the year of the 100th Session of the International Labour Conference, a year in which the eighth legislature began in Cape Verde, the world continues to suffer from the effects of what many claim is one of the worst recessions of the last 75 years. Indeed, it has been predicted that the consequences of this event will be felt more keenly in developing countries in the years to come.

Thus, many await the guidance and decisions of the international organizations, in particular the ILO in its role as a privileged forum for tripartite discussion.

On behalf of the Government of Cape Verde, I should like to congratulate the Organization and the Director-General, Mr Juan Somavia, on the central theme of the Report, social protection, and for organizing, within the framework of this Conference, a high-level discussion on the crisis.

The last decade was a significant period for Cape Verde. As a nation, we have consolidated the gains we have made and we are advancing towards a new national agenda of economic transformation and social modernization.

Economic growth and strategic interventions led to a major fall in the rate of poverty, which fell from 37 per cent in 2001 to around 24 per cent in 2010. As a nation, we have already achieved four of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of the United Nations (UN) and we are in a position to achieve the remaining goals by the 2015 target date.

Cape Verde has also taken a series of strategic decisions in the social sector concerning family support.

We have integrated public officials into the social security system and coverage is being extended to a number of occupational categories.

Furthermore, we have increased the minimum monthly pension to 5,000 Cape Verdean Escudos, with around 23,000 elderly persons and persons living with disabilities benefitting as a result.

However, we still face challenges.

Cape Verde forms part of a changing world. Our excessive dependency on the outside world leaves us highly vulnerable to external problems. Thus, the greatest challenge we face will be, without a doubt, the implementation of our vision. In the light of this vision for the nation and a broad dialogue, a series of strategic challenges were identified. Allow me to highlight four of the seven major strategic objectives:

- the construction of a dynamic, competitive, innovative and sustainable economy;
- the promotion of the growth of the private sector, investment and productivity;
- the promotion of development and social cohesion;
- the empowerment of human resources.

The Government took up all of these issues as a part of its programme, integrating all the components of dignified work.

Unemployment in Cape Verde is a structural problem. Government action to create jobs is based around three main strategic axes: firstly, dynamic action to promote economic growth; secondly, the Government is to carry out a series of actions to

ensure the development of a strong private sector, capable of generating employment. However, the crisis has reduced the private sector's capacity to generate jobs. Therefore, it is vital to match training with the needs of the market, with a particular focus on quality; thirdly, we will create the skills for the twenty-first century.

Our aim is to build a knowledge-based society, with a competent and empowered workforce, capable of competing with the world's best.

Cape Verde is currently implementing a programme to reform and modernize the social protection system, an essential component of dignified work.

We shall continue to increase the number of persons covered by social pensions and actions will be carried out to facilitate the participation of the informal sector, small and medium-sized enterprises and micro-enterprises in the social security system. An initiative will also be launched to broaden the social security system, in order to cover those in the diaspora who are not covered, as well as those individuals interested in additional coverage.

Furthermore, Cape Verde has a modern Labour Code, which contains all the essential standards and respects the fundamental international principles and provisions. However, as a part of efforts to build a competitive country and create an environment that facilitates business, we need a more efficient labour market, one that respects the principle of decent work.

In this regard, Cape Verde has developed, and is now implementing, a new paradigm for the promotion of social dialogue through the negotiation and signing of strategic cooperation agreements, involving all the partners – the trade unions, the employers and the Government.

In my country, professional domestic workers are covered by the General Social Protection Regime for Employees (which entered into force as Decree-Law No. 47/2009, of 23 November).

With regards the provisions made for professional domestic workers, I wish to highlight that, in Cape Verde, even if a labour contract is informal, protection is guaranteed in case of illness, maternity, paternity, adoption, disability, old-age or death, as well as compensation for some family-related costs.

Before concluding, I would like to reaffirm the undertaking of my Government to comply with the commitments arising from the implementation of the Recommendations and Conventions.

We hope that by the end of July, we will be in a position to sign an implementation agreement for a programme designed to promote decent work. Cape Verde is also open to examining the possibility of participating in the work on the social protection floor.

Lastly, on behalf of the Government of Cape Verde, I should like to wish the ILO Assembly every success at this Conference.

It is only through an effective and inclusive tripartite approach that we will be able to reach decisions and recommendations that will reflect our mutual responsibilities in this extremely difficult political, economic and social context.

The desire for change and reform to address local, regional and global crises is an underlying theme of the Report of the Director-General. The Report is

rich in realistic ideas based on an analysis of international experience in Asia and the Pacific, providing a practical framework for building a sustainable future in accordance with the Decent Work Agenda, an instrument enabling an effective national response to mitigate the adverse effects of the financial and economic crisis.

This has been put into practice in our country with the national employment policy document developed in cooperation with the ILO for the last two years. The social partners and academics from several Iraqi universities played an important role in aligning this policy on the Constitution and human and civil rights. The policy also defines the priorities for channelling investment into the creation of jobs that preserve dignity and takes account of the future relationship between productive labour and sustainable enterprises, as well as strengthening the legislative and institutional framework for social dialogue, which is seen as the means of securing social stability and peaceful coexistence. In addition, it enables the private sector to become the main engine of promotion of all the different economic sectors.

This document was adopted by vote in the Council of Ministers on 22 March 2011; very briefly, it links two strategies, the National Development Strategy 2010–14 and the Poverty Reduction Strategy, and is thus crucial during this transition period. The institutional component of the document strengthens the roles and responsibilities of the Ministry of Labour and the tripartite National High Commission on Employment, comprising 14 deputy ministers, as well as representatives of the private sector and the social partners, alongside the role of the Iraqi Parliament through the creation of committees on employment and the reduction of unemployment.

Cooperation and coordination with the ILO Regional Office for Arab States in Beirut are ongoing, with a draft Memorandum of Understanding aimed at setting out a practical framework for the implementation of our Decent Work Country Programme dealing with full employment, social dialogue, social protection and extension of the application of occupational safety and health. This requires special assistance from the ILO and is a central concern of the Organization.

Before concluding, I would like to stress the importance of recognizing the State of Palestine, which should take its place on the international scene as an independent and fully sovereign State, which is the key to stability in the Middle East and the world. We also affirm the right of return of Palestinian refugees.

Lastly, we reiterate our need for ILO expertise to develop national plans and programmes, in particular with regard to vocational training methodologies based on new technologies, support for labour market institutions, regulation of the informal sector, capacity building in the Ministry of Labour to enable it to provide employment services, financial resources for SMEs, creating flexible working conditions and the establishment of environmental testing laboratories. We are confident in the capacity of our Ministry to play its role of guidance and coordination to enlist public institutions and the private sector in the effort to secure a sustainable future for all the sectors of the Iraqi labour market.

(Mr Hernández Sánchez takes the chair.)

Original Spanish: Mr GONZÁLEZ (Government, Paraguay)

I would like to congratulate the Director-General of the ILO, Mr Juan Somavia, for this year's Global Report, *Equality at work: The continuing challenge*. Also, I would like to mention the proposed Convention and Recommendation on domestic work, on which debates are being held at this Conference.

In this connection, in Paraguay, thanks to efforts made by the National Tripartite Commission to Examine and Promote the Labour Participation of Women (CTIO), which is coordinated by the Ministry of Justice and Labour and the Secretariat for Women of the Presidency of the Republic, various seminars and studies have been carried out in order to reach, finally, a consensus on documents relating to decent work for domestic workers. For the very first time, we have three persons here with us at this Conference who specifically represent this sector.

Moreover, it is important to note that institutional-ity is a cross-cutting topic; a consensus exists on the need to strengthen bodies governing labour and employment. In practice, priority has been given to three fundamental aspects: draft laws on the establishment of the Ministry of Labour; the unification of vocational training bodies, and the establishment of specific thematic directorates within the Ministry of Labour and Social Security.

I would now like to touch briefly on a very specific topic. In Paraguay, we feel that we have made major progress on a topic given priority by the ILO Director-General. I am referring specifically to youth employment. In my country, 50 per cent of unemployed persons are young people and 60 per cent of underemployed persons are aged between 15 and 29.

In Paraguay, we now have a tripartite body: a youth employment policy approved by trade unions, employers and the Government.

The national round table on employment generation for youth was established by presidential decree. It is coordinated by the Directorate for Youth Employment and has tripartite membership. After two years of work, this body has now met its main objective: designing a youth employment policy.

It is our priority to consolidate the process of youth employment, both by applying the policy and its programmes and by strengthening the Directorate for Youth Employment. We feel that this is a fundamental basis for designing and implementing an employment policy.

Moving to a different topic, concrete measures have been taken to promote fundamental rights, such as the fight against forced labour and child labour.

A few months ago, the new national strategy for the prevention and elimination of child labour and the protection of adolescent employment was approved in Paraguay, along with two coordination handbooks for workers aged under 18.

I would like to point out that our country places great importance on the International Labour Office. We are working very hard with members of parliament to pass the preliminary draft bill, submitted by the Executive to the Legislature in 2009, which proposes a reform of various articles of the Labour Code that have been highlighted by the Committee of Experts regarding aspects of freedom of association.

In this respect, we ask for the ongoing support of the ILO in providing training and advice on these

subjects and, hence, to provide the correct answers to concrete problems that arise.

Original Portuguese: Mr MAZOIO (Worker, Mozambique)

We believe that this 100th Session of the Conference is a fundamental milestone in the history of this agency of the United Nations.

The Conventions and Recommendations adopted by the ILO over its 100 Conferences, as well as all the other international instruments which have been adopted and the technical assistance made available in implementing these instruments and the development of the ILO, not only at headquarters in Geneva but also at its offices throughout the world, are proof of the Organization's important role in the context of labour relations throughout the world.

This development shows the importance of dialogue at all levels as an instrument for resolving problems and differences and as a mechanism for defining nationally and internationally accepted standards to ensure peace, stability and harmony in labour and socio-economic relations.

I should like to congratulate the Director-General of the ILO, Mr Juan Somavia, for the brilliant Report he has submitted to this Conference.

The Report not only clearly reflects the activities carried out in the general context of the objectives set out in the Organization's general programme, but also provides a clear picture of the challenges that the world must meet in order to promote fairer labour relations, based on balanced, free, democratic, just and equitable social dialogue.

Allow me, Mr President, to highlight the decent work programme and the approach being taken regarding the protection of domestic workers.

The decent work programme in Mozambique was developed with the active participation of the social partners, who are committed to achieving the common goal of promoting safe, lasting and sustainable employment with rights.

The social partners undertook to work together to meet the challenges set by precarious employment, low wages and a social protection system still unable to respond to the needs and expectations of the workers.

The prospect of adopting a Convention and a Recommendation on decent work for domestic workers is highly significant.

Mozambique is working very hard to unionize all domestic workers, in the interests of promoting and protecting their legitimate interests.

The planned adoption of international standards for this sector will, undoubtedly, serve as a major incentive for domestic workers, who currently constitute the least well-treated and least protected section of the working population, to organize.

There is a series of challenges that must be met in order to make decent work a reality and to overcome the difficulties which exist in a market economy ruled by competition and profit which does not take human and social aspects into account.

In Mozambique, our economy is based on agriculture and we need to provide better protection for the people working in that sector. The trade union movement is therefore encouraging the Government to ratify the Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129), an instrument that can contribute to the implementation of concrete measures to promote and defend the rights of the workers and to ensuring that their contribution to the economy is recognized.

Against this background, the Mozambican trade union movement is fighting to become stronger and more active in the struggle to promote and defend the rights and interests of the workers.

I should like to stress again the fundamental importance of ILO support in empowering trade unionists to participate effectively in collective bargaining, the development of initiatives on employment, equal rights and opportunities for men and women and the development of the social dialogue.

The OTM-CS would like to encourage the ILO to continue supporting Mozambique in designing and implementing concrete programmes for the promotion of decent work.

Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, we should like, in conclusion, to thank the Director-General for this Report, which we hope will be adopted and transformed into a guiding instrument.

We also believe that the Convention and Recommendation on decent work for domestic workers must be adopted. We reaffirm the need for all countries to make greater efforts to promote decent work within the framework of relevant and compelling social dialogue. We wish the Director-General and all the ILO staff every success in implementing the ongoing programmes on fairer and more equitable labour relations.

Original French: Mr HOSSU (Worker, Romania)

We welcome the Report presented by the Director-General. The time has indeed come to usher in a new era of social justice. We must do our utmost to put an end to the social crisis and to promote and apply the principles of decent work. We endorse the principles contained in the Report of the Director-General, Mr Juan Somavia, concerning the building of a world based on decent work and social progress.

It is essential to ensure that social actors are adaptable and flexible so that they can respond rapidly with effective solutions to new needs and new crises that emerge worldwide. This is why it is necessary more than ever before to promote the values and policies of the ILO, by relaunching social dialogue at this 100th Session of the Conference.

In these rapidly changing circumstances, we learn from each other. We find many sources of inspiration for the third millennium – a millennium where the dignity of workers must be respected, where freedom of speech and participation in democracy must be consolidated further so that they can develop. The members of the International Labour Organization must give today everywhere in the world an example with regard to the promotion of decent work, social progress and the common principles of dialogue and social justice at the workplace.

Unfortunately, the economic crisis is continuing in Romania, perpetuated by a policy that does not look kindly on social dialogue with employers and trade unions and is based on the subordination of political figures who govern Romania to the policies of the IMF, the World Bank and the Council of Foreign Investors. It is at the request of these institutions that we have introduced a new legislation for the labour force, and this is unacceptable.

The desire to eliminate trade unions in Romania has shown up even more quickly than the public might have expected. In just a short time, a few months, the Government amended the Labour Code and five fundamental labour market laws, namely:

the law on the organization of employers; the law on the organization of trade unions; the law on labour disputes; the law on collective bargaining; and the law on the economic and social council – all of which were brought together in a single umbrella law, which, very inappropriately and hypocritically, is called the Social Dialogue Act.

I would like to give you examples to illustrate what I have said. The Government has undermined the freedom of association of trade unions. The criteria pertaining to representativeness have become arbitrary. The Government has disproportionately increased the role of employers' representatives, to the detriment of trade unions, by allowing these representatives – who are actually family members of the employers – to negotiate collective bargaining contracts without restrictions, despite the fact that there are trade union organizations within the same companies.

The conditions relating to work and hiring, relations with employees and employers, and relations between those who hire or their organizations, are no longer clearly spelled out, despite the efforts made by the experts of the International Labour Office, whom I would like to thank once again for analysing government projects and drafting a protocol and draft recommendations in January.

In short, the Government has failed to take note of this point of view since January, and has also failed to take into consideration the viewpoints of the trade unions in Romania, Europe and worldwide.

Alongside these abhorrent amendments to the labour legislation, the Romanian social welfare state has been dismantled by counterproductive economic measures, on the grounds of establishing a so-called climate of austerity, built around the false idea of solidarity, which has led to unprecedented pauperization of the Romanian population.

All of these are brutal attacks on equity and social justice, which have been implemented with the complicity of the IMF and representatives of the European Commission, which has sapped the social pillar of the European Union.

We see double standards and two sets of promises: one for international meetings and the other nationwide in day-to-day work.

We hope that in the future, thanks to the support of the ILO and joint efforts by social partners, to stop the dismantling of the social welfare state, to usher in a new era based on the principles of decent work. I agree with my colleagues, who are convinced that we must trust in our values and policies, that we can build a prosperous society for all – and I endorse this position.

Before concluding, I would like to recall the principles enshrined in the Declaration of Philadelphia, in the hope that we will continue to bear them in mind during the ensuing debates: "Labour is not a commodity; freedom of expression and of association are essential to sustained progress; poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere; the war against want requires to be carried on with unrelenting vigour within each nation, and by continuous and concerted international effort in which the representatives of workers and employers, enjoying equal status with those of governments, join with them in free discussion and democratic decision with a view to the promotion of the common welfare."

If we really believe in these principles which we all affirm, it is time to prove it together. The time has come to do so.

Original French: Mr OUATTARA (Minister of Public Services, Labour and Social Security, Burkina Faso)

I would like to present here the apologies of our President, Mr Blaise Compaoré, who was invited here but is unable to attend because of conflicting schedules. His dedication to constructing a better world which would respect human dignity is well known.

As one of the people behind the African Union Extra-Ordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Africa in 2004, President Compaoré appealed to African countries again in Addis Ababa in 2007 at the ILO's 11th African Regional Meeting to make decent work a priority in African economic policies.

To transfer those words into action, Burkina Faso in December of 2009 welcomed the First African Decent Work Symposium. It is for this reason that my country takes this opportunity to renew its commitment to supporting all initiatives which promote decent work throughout the world.

This 100th Session of our Conference is taking place in an especially difficult context. It is a time when member States are endeavouring to consolidate their recovery and lay the foundations of strong, sustainable and balanced growth. We are all convinced of the need to create a job-intense growth model which will provide employment opportunities and improve living standards.

Burkina Faso welcomes the topical subject which is the "motto" of this 100th Session, "Building a future with decent work". This vision, at such a historic time for the Organization, calls on us to think about decent work as being crucial to fulfilment at work for women and men.

Burkina Faso is convinced, as His Excellency President Compaoré indicated at the Extraordinary Meeting of Heads of State of the African Union on Combating Poverty, which took place in September 2004 in Ouagadougou, that the peace and stability of our States will be strengthened through advances in employment. Through job creation and productivity, it will become possible to mitigate conflicts throughout the world, especially in Africa.

Burkina Faso, despite its problems, is developing innovative strategies to strengthen growth and improve household incomes. We have adopted numerous initiatives to promote youth employment. We have established direct consultation frameworks to allow consultations between social partners and vulnerable social groups. This has enabled us to achieve significant results and to minimize the consequences of the current crisis.

In social protection, our major innovation has been the establishment of a health insurance system which will eventually cover all of our population.

In order to meet this objective of decent work, the Government has begun to elaborate and implement sectoral strategies for promoting work and combating poverty. We have adopted a national employment policy, a national youth policy and a national teaching and vocational training policy. A national employment policy document is in its final stage of elaboration and will be adopted shortly to allow implementation of its provisions.

Just before this session of the Conference, the Decent Work Country Programme document devel-

oped with the ILO was approved on 27 May 2011. I should like to take this opportunity to thank the ILO for all the efforts it has made to help us complete the process and adopt such an important framework instrument for Burkina Faso.

At a time when our Organization has begun the process to improve the working of its Governing Body and the International Labour Conference, Burkina Faso wishes every success with these processes. Burkina Faso hopes that our work will lead to innovative and consensual solutions that will promote sustainable growth and decent work for all. On this note of hope, I thank the President and wish him again every success in guiding the work of the Conference.

Original Spanish: Mr RAMOS (Worker, Dominican Republic)

Kind regards from the National Confederation of Dominican Workers and the workers of the Dominican Republic that I represent and for whom I am the spokesperson in this 100th Session of the Conference, which has a historical significance for this house to which a large proportion of the world's workers may come to discuss the labour situation in their countries.

It is customary to measure the history of humanity in decades, so we should be proud that the ILO now is celebrating the 100th Session of its Conference; one century of Conferences that have improved labour relations in its member States.

Therefore, we should all congratulate ourselves for getting to this stage, as the descendants of leaders who, in their time, defended democracy and the rights of workers. We therefore congratulate those who are now at the helm of this important Organization of the United Nations, which we should preserve and support.

I am not exaggerating when I say, as we are gathered here at the 100th Session of the Conference, that in most of our countries a policy, which is now even stronger, has been put into place that reduces labour rights as part of the policies of deregulation that are promoted by various social, economic and political sectors who still believe that reducing the acquired rights of workers will improve their financial situation, even though it does not improve the situation of their country.

Reducing the labour rights of workers is something that creates inequality, precariousness and poverty, as the official statistics of my country indicate after more than four decades of continuous growth in GDP and economic stability.

Ten per cent of the wealthiest people have an income 23 times higher than the 40 per cent of the less fortunate. These data show that 14 per cent of the population lives in extreme poverty.

Between 2000 and 2006, GDP increased by 5.18 per cent, however, employment grew only by 1.95 per cent. Between 2007 and 2010, GDP increased by 5.4 per cent and employment only increased by 1.12 per cent.

Unemployment is around 14.9 per cent and 56 per cent of the economically active population is trapped in the informal sector of the economy. That is our reality: we have an economy that grows but employment that does not. This is a structural problem that requires a change of economic model, as shown in various sectors of the Dominican Republic.

In the last five years, surveys published by prestigious international companies indicate that unem-

ployment is one of the main problems facing the Dominican people.

Our trade union movement requests the implementation of decent jobs and we are working to identify the areas, forms and programmes to do so, because it is only through decent work that we will be able to help marginalized and excluded workers, categories into which most fall.

Less than a month ago, the main trade union organizations in the country, namely the Workers' Trade Union Autonomous Federation, the Confederation of Trade Union Unity and the National Confederation of Dominican Workers, managed to hold various protest days and demonstrations of workers to demand a 17 per cent increase in the minimum wage. This entered into force on 1 June, in a resolution of the National Salaries Committee. It was not the percentage asked for by the trade union movement, but it was higher than the previous one, which was 15 per cent.

One important result of this event was that social dialogue was revived among us, employers, and the Government. At an early meeting, a discussion space was opened and the employers urged their members to increase wages beyond the minimum, in addition to other compensatory measures which we hope will be put into effect for the benefit of the workers.

I would like to stress in this important 100th Session of the Conference the role played in this process by the Minister of Labour, Dr Max Puig; he was always in favour of wage increases and for the parties in disagreement to reach common ground.

In the context of this demand for wage increases, which is raised every two years and only related to the private sector minimum wage, the trade unions drafted a bill which has already been sent to Congress in my country with the aim of aligning wages with inflation so that they are automatically increased whenever the price of a basic food basket goes up.

The right to freedom of association continues to be violated by a large part of the employers' sector, despite being enshrined as a constitutional right for the first time in history, along with other labour rights, in article 62 of our Constitution, which was approved on 26 January last year.

In the last ten years, more than 50,000 workers lost their jobs for exercising their right to organize, as enshrined in the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98). Women are the most affected by these measures. They are forced to live in precarious situations, which create crises in their homes and leads to more precarious work in the informal sector, in which they are in the majority.

We have to be aware and fight for the respect of this right, because without strong trade unions we will not have a strong trade union movement. For that reason, beyond the complaints that we bring to the courts in our country, we hope that the ILO can create some initiatives that will overcome the repression and violation of this extremely important right.

In this respect, CNTD held a national conference on freedom of association in April in the State University and showed a documentary with dramatic stories of workers dismissed from their jobs. This is

one of our ways of making the world aware of the situation of labour rights in my country.

The Dominican social security system is now ten years old and is one of the most important successes of the trade union movement in our society in general.

However, the principles of universality, solidarity, quality of services and medication, fundamental elements of the social security system, have not been fulfilled.

Less than half the population is insured, exclusion is rife and there is no real policy to expand the system, in accordance with the spirit of the act approved by the Legislature, in order to try to put an end to the injustice of denying health services to most Dominicans.

What we demand now is a primary health-care model as a means of launching a promotion and preventative health-care strategy, thereby ensuring cost control and the sustainability of health care. The public health network and child health-care bodies should also be strengthened.

One of our main requests is the introduction of a solidarity pension under the subsidized regime as a means of reducing poverty levels.

We have also requested the creation of an institute to be in charge of labour risks, on the condition that it is a highly efficient and professional body.

Act No. 87/01, which created the Dominican social security system, should be revised for the benefit of the Dominican society and its most vulnerable people, who are in the majority in that society.

We hope that this historic 100th Session of the International Labour Conference establishes precedents with results which will strengthen democracy, and the trade union movement in particular.

Original Arabic: Mr LUQMAN (Representative, Arab Labour Organization)

As we celebrate the 100th Session of the Conference, I should like to commend Mr Juan Somavia for his efforts, together with the Governing Body, to promote decent work and for alerting us to the future risks in a world beset by uncertainty, in which work is undervalued and the real producers bear the brunt of crises that are not of their making.

This session is unlike past sessions for the peoples of the Arab world: they have regained the initiative, after millions of people in several countries have taken to the streets for days, weeks or even months to voice their demands peacefully. They were demanding rights enshrined in the Declaration of Philadelphia and the Constitutions of the ILO and the Arab Labour Organization: the right to work, to a fair wage, to live in dignity and to realize social justice.

These historic events have shown that stability and progress cannot be achieved with a crust of bread and restricted freedom, and cannot endure without effective social dialogue, genuine representation of employers and workers, and social justice that draws a balance between rights and duties, promotes corporate social responsibility and reduces growth and income disparities between the different groups and regions.

In his Report, *A new era of social justice*, the Director-General was right in highlighting the importance of the Arab revolutions and the new vision they have shown to the world, a vision of peaceful change. He was also right in affirming that the Organization was on the right side of history, and that

we need to work towards this new era in the coming years.

Those who believe in the objectives of the ILO will support the peaceful process under way in the Arab world towards democracy and social justice. The time has come to provide every means of support to employment and develop labour administrations in the framework of social dialogue and strengthen fundamental rights at work. Our two Organizations, the ILO and the Arab Labour Organization, have begun consultations on a joint vision, in particular as regards the Arab Employment Agenda adopted at the joint conference in Beirut. The Agenda represents a regional response to the Global Jobs Pact and the Kuwait economic summit.

We are all proud to participate in this historic session of the Conference. This is the 30th session of the Conference that has examined the situation of the workers of Palestine and the other occupied Arab territories, in application of the resolutions adopted in 1974 and 1980, and we would like to thank Mr Somavia for his commitment to implementing the resolutions adopted by this Conference and for fielding an annual high-level fact-finding mission, which is characterized by neutrality and commitment. The Report this year states that no real improvement can take place unless the restrictions imposed by the Israeli occupation, and the occupation itself, are removed.

We agree entirely, and wonder how the Conference will respond to the facts presented by the mission. We know that the situation in Palestine and in the other occupied Arab territories has been one of the darkest stains on the history of humankind for over 60 years. The peoples of the region are committed to peace, rights, justice and international law.

The question remains – does Israel want a just peace with other peoples or does it want slavery kept in place by its military oppression? The first option is an invitation to life; the second is a call for destruction which will have a far-reaching impact in terms of space and time. Recognizing the will of the international community means recognizing the State of Palestine within the borders of 4 June 1967.

We are witnessing a new historical era in my region, and this is an opportunity for the ILO to revitalize its instruments to achieve equity, justice and social peace. I wish the Conference every success.

Ms MONDON (Minister for Education, Employment and Human Resources, Seychelles)

I am honoured to have this opportunity to address this historic International Labour Conference today. Historic, because it is hosting its 100th Session and also because we are making preparations to mark 100 years of the existence of our Organization. Since 1919, the International Labour Organization has embarked on a challenging journey towards the attainment of human dignity and justice, as well as lasting peace in the world.

I also wish to convey to the Director-General, Mr Juan Somavia, the good wishes of the President, Government and the people of Seychelles for his visionary leadership of the ILO over the years. He has brought a new dynamism to the ILO, in spite of the challenges that our Organization continues to face.

I have carefully studied the Director-General's Report, *A new era of social justice*. It is a document that aims to bring greater synergy to the promotion of sustainable development for lasting social justice.

Indeed, equality at work is a continuing challenge but, although far-reaching, it can be achieved; in this new era of social justice, equality must be achieved.

As the global economy transforms, the challenges take on new dimensions. Globalization is one of the phenomena that came onto our horizon a decade ago, and we all know the consequences it has brought. While some countries have benefited from opportunities it offered, others have become poorer.

This is a cause for concern for all of us. Sadly, as a result of these global catastrophes, those who are not responsible suffer the most. In an era when we are striving for social justice, such a situation is unacceptable.

The struggle for social justice is a colossal task. Let us be reminded that instability, poverty and underdevelopment anywhere are permanent threats to prosperity everywhere. The threat of piracy in the Indian Ocean is a menace to the stability of the Seychelles, depriving our people of employment opportunities in the two principal pillars of the economy, tourism and fishing. During these difficult times, financial and technical support from the international community should be more tangible and accessible, particularly to the vulnerable small island States.

As we stand on the threshold of a great event, in both the life of the ILO and that of mankind, our presence bears testimony to advocacy of the ILO's values and policies and of concerted efforts and commitment to a higher standard of living and greater enjoyment of equality in the whole world.

The deliberations of our Conference set the most conducive environment for a thorough examination of the issues before us and what the ILO and its national constituency of governments, employers and workers should do to eliminate impediments to social justice as we move closer to the 100th anniversary of the ILO.

Ministries of employment and labour must, more than ever, play the leading role in ensuring that inefficient growth is properly addressed and in restoring social and economic balance. I am happy to note that labour administration and labour inspection are on the agenda this year, as they are the key components to tackling inequality and discrimination at work. Together, we must move with greater courage and inspiration towards this noble cause.

Seychelles also faced the same dilemma. The Government embarked on a Macroeconomic Reform Programme in 2008 in order to re-stabilize its economy and, in doing so, it took bold decisions, such as streamlining the public sector; greater fiscal management; and floating the national currency. However, it also adopted responsive strategies and measures to mitigate the impact of the social consequences of the reform on its people. The provision of re-employment services, training, and re-skilling programmes facilitated employment in the private sector for those who exited the public sector. As such, the unemployment rate remained below 5 per cent.

I note from the Report that the way forward is social justice, and one of the ILO's tools to achieve such an objective is through the Decent Work Country Programmes. I am pleased to announce that, this year, the Government of Seychelles will sign its Decent Work Country Programme with the ILO for the continuous provision of quality jobs, social protection and workers' rights in a more open

market economy. I am convinced that the Programme will contribute to addressing labour market issues as well as improving the country's economic performance, leading to a better quality of life.

In concluding, I would like to congratulate the ILO for all its achievements. We are all aware that social justice is a challenge faced by all member States. Therefore, let us renew our commitment to work together as governments, employers and workers to attain the lofty goals of humanity as envisaged by the founders of the ILO almost 100 years ago.

Original Spanish: Mr DON MALAVO (Government, Equatorial Guinea)

Mr President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, the Government of my country, Equatorial Guinea, has the honour of congratulating the ILO on the topic of reflection that was chosen for this year, "Building a future with decent work".

This process of reflection forms part of the development plan crafted by my Government in 2007, which we called "Equatorial Guinea to 2020".

Let me inform you that my country's economy has been undergoing a spectacular transformation since oil was discovered a little over a decade ago.

At present, Equatorial Guinea, which has a population of around 1 million, is the third largest oil producer in sub-Saharan Africa, after Nigeria and Angola, and is the leading producer of crude oil in Central Africa. We also meet 3 per cent of global demand for methane gas and 17 per cent of the demand of the market in the United States of America. Moreover, we export some 3.4 million metric tonnes of liquid natural gas, mainly to Japan, the Republic of Korea and Taiwan, China.

Despite the financial crisis, over the past few years this economic windfall has enabled my country to implement major infrastructure projects such as highways, social housing, schools, hospitals, airports, and electricity and drinking water supply networks throughout the country, although we do recognize that much still remains to be done.

Consequently, our country has witnessed the arrival of hundreds of companies from Europe, America, Asia and Africa as contractors and subcontractors in various sectors such as hydrocarbon, oil and gas, construction, and the financial and service sectors, and this has created many thousands of new offices and jobs.

Against the background of this positive development, which we never saw in the two centuries of Spanish colonization, we are seeing the appearance of new labour disputes, which are without precedent in the recent economic history of our country. They are caused by the companies, by workers' ignorance of their rights and obligations, and by the outdated labour legislation that is in force.

With the aim of improving the quality of life of its citizens, the Government of my country, through the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, for which I am responsible, is at this very moment amending, together with employers and workers, the law on the general structure of labour and the existing law on social security, with a view to introducing innovative aspects such as a minimum wage, social protection for domestic workers and taxi drivers, and incorporating all disabled persons into the social security regime. This gives you just a few examples of the reforms that the Government of Equatorial Guinea intends to implement.

With the firm desire to combat poverty, precarious employment, junk jobs, the current amendment of the labour law aims at enacting legislation that favours decent work and ensures social protection for workers within a consensus-based framework that preserves the interests of all parties.

To this end, I would like to take this excellent opportunity to formally invite the ILO to provide technical support to the Government of my country for the drafting of a survey on the active population, training and employment, which the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, together with the Ministry of Planning, has programmed.

The Government has several objectives with regard to this survey.

These are as follows: to reliably determine the rate of unemployment and underemployment; to identify the segment of the working population that lacks the appropriate skills needed to get a job; to predict the amount of new entrants on the labour market each year; to enable the Government to adopt coherent policies that facilitate the creation of many jobs and self-employment opportunities for all by 2020, especially for young people, women and the disabled; and to establish a vocational training programme of adequate quality and scope, with a view to reducing dependency on foreign labour that is relatively better qualified owing to the distortion caused by the predominant position of the oil sector in the national economy.

I could not conclude without telling the plenary that my country is organizing, from 29 June to 1 June, an African Union Summit which will be attended by more than 52 Heads of State and Government under the slogan "Accelerating youth empowerment for sustainable development".

In conclusion, the Government of my country is fully convinced that the response to the Global Jobs Pact and efforts to combat poverty to achieve the Millennium Development Goals depends not on the creation of any old job, but on the creation of employment and decent jobs that ensure social protection and the physical and moral integrity of persons and also workers' rights in an environment that allows enterprises to grow and expand and attracts more foreign and domestic capital and investment, which in turn generates more decent jobs.

Ms OPECHOWSKA (*Employer, Poland*)

I welcome the fact that this Conference is focusing on important issues in various key fields, particularly decent work for domestic workers, social protection and labour administration.

In this context, I would like to describe the economic situation in Poland. Forecasts indicate that the rate of economic growth in our country will reach over 4 per cent of GDP this year, through public investments in infrastructure, private investment and likely increases in consumption. Poland is currently facing the challenge of having to reduce the public deficit to below 3 per cent by 2012.

The continuing growth in domestic demand is a major contributor to economic growth, and is the reason why Poland recorded one of the best results in the European Union for the year 2010 – namely GDP growth of 3.8 per cent.

Employers point out that Poland's strong labour market has, by and large, survived the crisis. Employers' organizations currently forecast moderate growth, both in terms of employment and wages, which will increase household spending.

In Poland, we have not yet felt the strong impact of the crisis. However, we have to be vigilant and reasonable in our spending. Decisions that are not based on careful calculations could cause serious problems for enterprises, especially in the SME sector.

Against this background, the Government is proposing reforms that are not conducive to the development of social dialogue, and may undermine it. The Polish Government is proposing reforms to protect the most vulnerable groups. However, as is usual in such situations, the Government has proposed changes that are not very popular because they generally involve cuts to social benefits.

Employers' organizations affiliated to the Tripartite Commission for Social and Economic Affairs understand the proposals made by trade unions aiming to protect the poorest. However, we need to realize that, given the present state of public finances, such measures could have negative consequences for the State's budget and public debt.

Last year, the Government introduced changes to the functioning of pension funds meant to solve the problems of the pension system. These days, we cannot rely on the State, and should instead think ahead and take measures now to protect our retirement income in the future. We must be careful in analysing the costs of pension funds so that they are most effective for insured people.

Debate on this subject is continuing at social dialogue level. Polish employers' organizations welcome the fact that 100th Session of the International Labour Conference has appointed a Committee for the Recurrent Discussion on Social Protection.

Social dialogue has also been weakened by problems relating to the consultation process in Poland. Consultation should take place in an efficient and effective social forum, which is pivotal to the process.

In Poland, the consultation process is far from ideal, as controversial proposals have not been discussed with the social partners. The terms of the consultation process have not been respected, which has often made consultation impossible.

Only the Ministry of Labour has complied with existing legislation in this regard. Other ministries, although they are members of the tripartite commission, often fail to consult the social partners with regard to legislative proposals and changes.

Employers' organizations, in cooperation with the Polish trade unions, seek to address the problems associated with the consultation process. They are committed to the principles of social dialogue, in order to solve problems in a way that will not adversely affect the functioning of public finances, which could lead to a serious crisis.

Original Russian: Mr ALIMUKHAMEDOV (Government, Uzbekistan)

The key issues addressed in the Report of the Director-General are decent work, employment, and social protection.

The Report justly notes that "those countries that followed a more inclusive, job-centred strategy have been rewarded with more limited job losses, less social tension and therefore quicker economic recovery".

These strategic goals and priorities reflect measures that have been taken and are being implemented in Uzbekistan.

First and foremost, I am speaking about sustainable economic development. Over a brief period, the economy of Uzbekistan has overcome the adverse effects of the global crisis and in 2010 has achieved a GDP growth of 8.5 per cent. According to international financial institutions this is one of the highest rates in the world.

Secondly, we have consolidated the banking and financial system. The aggregate capital of commercial banks in 2010 increased by 36 per cent. In 2011, we are forecasting a 1.3-fold increase in commercial credits of banks issued to start ups, for microfinancing and to reach investment goals.

Thirdly, we are successfully implementing a special anti-crisis programme of measures for 2009–12. We are realizing the Government's programme on "The Year of small businesses and private entrepreneurship". This includes specific initiatives to create jobs.

Fourthly, we have seen dynamic job growth. Whereas in 2008 we created some 660,000 jobs, in 2010 we created more than 950,000, of which 600,000 were created in the small business sphere, and some 200,000 thanks to home work arrangements.

Fifthly, pursuant to the policy document on the development of democratic reforms and formation of a civil society, great emphasis has been placed on developing social partnership. This matches the objectives set out in the Report of the Director-General of the ILO (social protection, social security and tripartism).

The economic and social reforms being carried out in Uzbekistan have led to stable economic growth as well as increased employment and increased household income. This is a crucial precondition for reducing the incidence of child labour.

Over the 20 years of its independent development, Uzbekistan has increased its minimum wage some 14 fold. The aggregate incomes of households have increased 8.6 fold in real terms. Government expenditure on social protection per capita has increased more than five fold. Each year 60 per cent of the Government budget is allocated to health, education and other spheres related to the social protection of our population, including children.

Uzbekistan has ratified 13 fundamental Conventions of the ILO, including Conventions Nos 138 and 182. After ratifying these Conventions Uzbekistan has been consistently taking steps to implement them. These include: the adoption of important laws on the minimum age for employment and liability for violations of laws concerning employment of minors; the establishment of a special inter-ministerial working group to provide information on the ILO Conventions that we have ratified; we are carrying out an awareness-raising campaign to explain international labour standards; we are implementing specific measures to eradicate worst forms of child labour including homelessness and parental neglect, drug use, prostitution and human trafficking. There is no child slavery or indentured servitude in our country and no use of children in armed conflicts.

The priority areas of economic and social policy in Uzbekistan are thus in harmony with the fundamental principles of the ILO as regards ensuring decent work, promoting employment and providing social protection.

We note the positive nature of the provisions of the report under discussion. We support the con-

structive suggestions made in it to consider national interests and national specificities of ILO member States.

Original French: Mr BULUPIY GALATI (Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Democratic Republic of the Congo)

I would like to sincerely thank the Director-General, Mr Juan Somavia, for his Report and specifically for the technical support which he continues to provide to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the fields of employment, labour and social protection.

The items on the agenda for this session have attracted my attention because they cover different aspects of the world of work. The tripartite delegation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo welcomes the Global Report of the Director-General, which underscores the correlation between the global economic and financial and the employment crisis, against a backdrop of poverty and deteriorating social conditions.

The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo supports the draft Conventions and Recommendations that have been drawn up on domestic workers because domestic work, which is still marginalized, needs to be recognized as being on a par with other categories of work, and performed in conditions of safety and dignity. Once they are adopted, these new standards will allow us – and I am convinced of this – to improve the living standards of domestic workers throughout the world.

With the goal not only of promoting decent work but also harmonizing our labour standards with those of the ILO, my country has elaborated – in close collaboration with social partners and the ILO Regional Office for Africa – a Decent Work Country Programme which will soon be presented to the Council of Ministers for adoption.

I should like to take this opportunity to reaffirm the commitment of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to human rights and fundamental liberties, as enshrined in the international legislative documents to which my country has acceded.

It should be noted that, as part of the reconstruction efforts in our country, the Government has adopted, at the behest of the Head of State, His Excellency Joseph Kabila Kabange, a programme covering five key focus areas, including employment. It is with this in mind that I have the pleasure of announcing the adoption by the National Labour Council of a National Policy on Employment and Professional Training, adopted at its Fifth Extraordinary Session, held last May. The implementation of this policy will stimulate growth and development in our country, through full, productive and decent employment.

To facilitate these efforts, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has a National Professional Training Institute to improve the skills of job seekers and workers, and a National Employment Office, to organize the labour market. I would also like to note that the General Labour Inspectorate has been transformed into a special service which is independent, in financial and administrative terms, in order to increase its effectiveness.

With regard to social protection, the tripartite delegation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is of the view that we need to improve and extend social coverage to all the strata of the population. It is within this specific framework that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo or-

ganized, at the beginning of June and with the support of the ILO Regional Office for Africa, the first national seminar on the social protection floor and a national fund to support the development of a health insurance system.

In order to strengthen social dialogue and in the wake of reforms implemented by public organizations, the Government has reintroduced tripartite management on the governing bodies of both the National Social Security Institute and the National Professional Training Institute.

My Government is committed to respecting its international obligations with respect to the work of the ILO and remains motivated by a strong will to construct, in the heart of Africa, a State that is based on the rule of law and a nation that is democratic, strong and prosperous.

Original Arabic: Mr GHOSN (Worker, Lebanon)

On behalf of the Lebanese workers, I should like to thank the President of the Conference, as well as the Director-General and the Chairperson of the Governing Body, for everything they have done to draw attention to the need for social justice, which is not merely a concept, but a human right and a fundamental necessity in today's world.

For several years now, this subject has been highlighted in reports, discussions and activities of the Organization, through the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, or the focus on equality at work and the promotion of decent work, not to mention the long-standing quest for respect for trade union rights and freedom of association, as well as the international labour standards and Conventions and Recommendations adopted at previous sessions of our Conference.

In this era of economic globalization throughout our societies, we cannot speak of social justice, as we see it in the developing countries, without mentioning the policies pursued by financially prominent countries such as the United States and some countries of Western Europe, and we should like to draw your attention to the extremely dangerous role of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

I think it is a mistake to think that the effects of the 2008 financial and economic crisis have now been reabsorbed.

It is true that certain countries that were first hit by the crisis have tried to hide its effects by providing massive support to the major banks, buying back debt with treasury funds, and levying higher taxes on the poorest segments of society, as well as the middle classes and low-income households, hoping to stave off or postpone the crisis. However, the pressure on large parts of the poorer population, as is the case in some countries of the South, reflects the inadequacy of the measures taken and the injustice they entail. Crises of the centres of neo liberalism cannot be fixed by plundering the wealth and financial and human resources of the countries of the third world.

Without wishing to gloss over the internal causes of the revolutions and uprisings in the Arab countries, we believe that one of the main factors lies in the global evaluation of wealth and labour and the continuing pressure on our States to apply economic adjustment measures, to privatize and to put an end to the role of the public sector and the protective role of the State in most social sectors.

How can an emerging country that does not have access to a minimum of technology to develop its industry or its agriculture possibly enter into a fair partnership in the framework of the WTO?

The obvious result is further destruction of already weak structures in industry, agriculture and the rest of the real sector, while foreign, domestic or mixed investment in highly profitable sectors is maintained, making the rich richer, while swelling the ranks of those living under the poverty line, not to mention the consequences in terms of debt, collapse of state sovereignty and increasing economic and political dependence.

Our Organization, which for over 100 years has joined the efforts of the peoples of the world who seek peace, is called upon today to create a new world order leading to a globalization where peoples control their own wealth and resources, far from being subjected to pressures, diktat and mass plundering of their resources.

Since its inception, our Organization has been intrinsically linked to the concept of a just peace, rejection of all forms of occupation, and the pursuit of an enabling environment for the achievement of its objectives. Our Organization cannot accept what has been going on in Palestine for over six decades – the occupation of land belonging to others, the killing, the expulsion of Palestinian inhabitants and the importation of hordes of settlers from all over the world, making our land a breeding ground for perpetual crises fuelled by Israeli policies.

We therefore consider that global stability, justice and peace cannot coexist with an Israeli policy of aggression, a policy which was revealed to us in its worst forms during the recent speech of the Israeli Prime Minister to the American Congress.

This also applies to the continuing Israeli occupation of part of our country, Lebanon, occupied Al-Quds, and the Syrian Golan, which places our peoples under the obligation, and gives them the right, to engage in all forms of resistance to put an end to this occupation and create an independent State of Palestine, with Al-Quds as its capital, and the liberation of the occupied Arab territories in the Golan, and the Shebaa farms and Kfar Shouba hills in Lebanon.

To address the consequences of a globalized economy, we must work towards a new social pact, a new social contract, which reshapes the relationship between the Authority/State and society, a pact based on social justice.

Mr RIMAL (Worker, Nepal)

In the cricket world, the number 100 has a significant meaning. The players receive wide-ranged congratulations and inspiration from their well-wishers who say: "Guys, you did it, congrats for hitting a century score".

Today, let me congratulate the ILO for reaching a score of a century; the score of International Labour Conference sessions – the 100th Session. And I congratulate the Organization on behalf of the entire Nepalese working class, the unions clubbed into our unique platform known as the Joint Trade Union Confederation Centre (JTUCC), and my own national centre, the General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT).

No doubt the ILO was established in a stormy period of world history, a journey that set out to address differently the ongoing fierce class struggle between the "haves" and the "have-nots". The ILO

is completing the benchmark of nearly a century. During this period, the world of work has changed tremendously. An interesting change, which has shifted the focus of the world labour movement visibly, from the developed world to the world of the least developed countries (LDCs), converting the global South into a house of overwhelming masses of workers, composed mainly of young people; and they survive with a great dream, a future with decent work, and if they believe that their dream is shattered, they dare to revolt – anywhere and any way.

In his opening speech, Mr Somavia stated: “As we celebrate our 100th Session, our world of work is certainly in turmoil”. He mentioned that 3.5 billion people in the world together have the same income as 61 million people. He concluded that unfair globalization had systematically increased inequality almost everywhere in the last 30 years, as definitely reflected in that figure. I firmly second his point.

In reply to Brother Somavia’s question “Can we, will we, do we, want to make a difference?” I have a mixed response: “Yes or no”. Honestly, I doubt here looking at the slow delivery of this specialized United Nations body.

Let us think how to synchronize our programme, our action and the very structure of our own ILO to accommodate this change, and the change which looms in the near future.

As a Worker delegate from one of the least developed countries, I can tell you that we have similar issues on our agenda. The ILC is discussing this year social protection, extending rights to domestic workers, issues of undervalued labour administration and labour inspection, and discrimination.

We are also discussing modalities and schemes to run a newly initiated social security system for all workers. We have concluded a landmark agreement with the employers’ organizations, despite a hue and cry from some quarters of the business community. Let me express our sincere thanks to the ILO for its cooperation in our exercise for labour legislation reform.

We Nepalese are still struggling hard to bid farewell to our prolonged political transition. A Herculean job, ranging from the institutionalization of the first republic of this century to the declaration of a new statute which is friendly to the world of work, is in progress but slow.

As the international community knows, the decade-long insurgency has prompted Nepalese youth to seek work on the international job market; we are heavily affected by unsafe jobs; the majority of our people work in precarious jobs.

Very many of our people are only engaged in domestic work. Thus for us, domestic work means a job waiting for Nepalese at home and aboard. That is why we know what exploitation means in this particular sector. It is for this reason that I urge the Conference to mark this 100th Session by adopting a new Convention on domestic workers without hesitation.

With regards to discrimination, I would like proudly to mention our perfectly inclusive parliament.

I should like also to refer to another agenda item of this Conference, labour administration. This also resonates with us, because we are demanding an all-powerful National Labour Commission for quick monitoring and a guarantee of justice.

I have been asked by the Nepalese working masses as a whole and their trade unions to extend sincere thanks on their behalf. The workers’ Electoral College has entrusted my national centre and elected my comrade to the ILO Governing Body as one of its delegates. I thank you and swear we shall not disappoint you. We will try our best.

Mr KONKOLEWSKY (*Representative, International Social Security Association*)

I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate the International Labour Conference on its great achievements since 1919. In changing and often challenging times, the Conference has brought together governments, employers and trade union representatives to promote social justice for the benefit of peoples worldwide.

This year, the worldwide membership of the International Social Security Association (ISSA), consisting of more than 330 government departments and social security administrations in 153 countries, has been looking forward to the International Labour Conference with great anticipation.

The Recurrent Discussion on Social Protection is expected to provide significant guidance and impetus for strengthening worldwide efforts to extend social security coverage.

We must use the unique opportunity of this year’s session of the International Labour Conference to rise to the challenge of substantially extending social security coverage.

ISSA and its members are actively contributing to the International Labour Conference debate on this crucial topic.

As expressed by ISSA’s President in the Committee for the Recurrent Discussion on Social Protection, our views can be summarized in seven points.

First, we fully support the ILO’s two-dimensional strategy for the extension of social security coverage, which combines coverage for the whole population with high levels of income security through contributory systems.

Second, we welcome the high value that the ILO attaches to good governance and the effective and efficient management of social security systems. High-performing and well-governed social security institutions are indeed a precondition for the success of any national coverage extension strategy.

Third, in line with the new ISSA strategy on the extension of coverage, we are committed to assisting our members in their activities to extend coverage. For social security institutions, this includes, in particular, improving contribution collection and compliance, developing administrative solutions for groups which are difficult to cover, supporting the administration of non-contributory schemes and advocating for the extension of social security. To enable our members to better fulfill these key roles, we have launched an ambitious programme to develop administrative and good governance guidelines, and provide good practices, benchmarking opportunities and exchange platforms to ISSA members.

Fourth, considering our focus on the capacities of social security administrations, ISSA activities complement the two-dimensional strategy of the ILO.

Fifth, the activities of ISSA can contribute directly to the goals of the Social Protection Floor Initiative, for example through transferring knowl-

edge on successful delivery of minimum benefits or through creating fiscal space for such benefits.

Sixth, ISSA offers its full support and expertise to the ILO and its partners in further building national capacities to implement both vertical and horizontal coverage.

Finally, in addition to our commitment to promoting the existing ILO Conventions and Recommendations on social security, we also share the recognition of the need for an international instrument that would give guidance to policy-makers and administrators regarding horizontal coverage extension.

Successful social security extension is possible, not least due to the efforts of social security institutions.

Based on the strong complementarities between the ILO and ISSA strategies, we look forward to opening a new chapter in our mutual, institutional relations. I am convinced that the ILO and ISSA, working hand in hand on the policy and administrative bases for dynamic, adequate and sustainable social security schemes, can make a real difference for the billions of people that are still without adequate social security protection.

Original Spanish: Mr AGUILAR (Worker, Costa Rica)

The trade union movement of Costa Rica endorses the contents of the Report of the Director-General, whom we would like to congratulate on his tireless efforts on the international stage, as he seeks justice and equality for all those in the world who suffer from the consequences of an economic growth that has been uncoupled from human development.

We understand human development as an extension of capacities and equal opportunities, with the focus being on the well-being of persons. These same persons must have the right to enjoy a long and healthy life and to develop skills, acquire knowledge and receive decent wages, free from threats to their physical and financial integrity.

Society aims to ensure increasing equity and a real distribution of wealth and broad access to opportunities for all. Such hopes are reflected in the Report in the form of the right to social security, access to quality education, decent work, decent pay, the reduction of social gaps, non-discrimination, the elimination of child labour, and the total and absolute abolition of slavery and of forced labour.

We could also list a great many other issues, such as decent housing, sports and culture, just to name a few. One thing is certain, this Report recognizes the striking degree of inequality that is more present in some countries than in others and this is why the ILO is acting as a driving force, paving the way in an international community where we often come up against sarcasm, scorn and lies.

International financial institutions, and now the European Union, promote fiscal health but in a regrettable way. They are not calling for effective and progressive tax systems because the market does not want this. Instead, they are promoting the idea of reducing fiscal deficits along with citizens' rights.

They have not made any appeals for cuts in spending on military hardware and weapons, equipment for which there should be no need in sensible societies. Such items are prohibitively ex-

pensive; getting rid of them would mean an end to poverty and misery.

Foreign debt continues to pose a problem for a great many countries. Debt cancellation is indispensable if those resources are to be reassigned to help the ILO achieve its goals.

There have been a great many presidential summits, as well as major world events on various topics which are of concern to humanity, such as food, climate change, new energy sources, social security, education for all, among others, and these have given rise to undertakings by governments to solve problems. In this very room various Presidents have been applauded. However, once these meetings are over, leaders return to their countries and fail to keep their promises. As a result there is no positive impact for their citizens.

As far as we are concerned, what the ILO is proposing is not an easy task, nor has it been easy to implement and comply with the Conventions. However, we believe that we should not give up. We support the Director-General's proposal to move forward. When we come up against brick walls, so to speak, we must be prepared to break down these walls and, as workers, we must support such initiatives.

In the mid-twentieth century, Costa Rica had politicians who thought of people rather than theories and who worked to develop a welfare state and this of course promoted human development in all nations.

Social guarantees were incorporated in the political Constitution and the 1940s saw the creation of social security instruments. The army was abolished following the civil war which took place at the end of that same decade.

Mr POTTER (Employer, United States)

In addressing the Director-General's Report on social justice, we note that the global economy continues to grow out of the depths of the recession. The immediate impacts of the crisis – in terms of both aggregate growth rates and job losses – were more severe in some countries than others, and the economic recovery was much quicker in certain areas than others. This highlights the fact that economic policies must be designed to fit the particular situation and context of a country. No single economic policy will be optimal for all countries – each must be tailored to reflect the particular national and local conditions, including the political, economic and social institutions of the country.

My remarks will focus on three issues which employers in the United States believe are the most important: increased growth and investment; labour market flexibility; and closing the "implementation gap".

First, as severe as the economic crisis was for many countries and many individuals – and continues to be for too many – the basic principles of economics that have guided growth and development over the past 60 years remain relevant. Private enterprise and investment have created millions of jobs and pulled millions of people out of poverty. The key elements facilitating enterprise and job creation are a stable macroeconomic policy with low inflation rates, and an economic environment that encourages investment in sustainable enterprises and competitive markets with a level playing field.

In many emerging markets and developing countries, most of the economy is informal, creating significant barriers to growth that benefits the poorest. The lack of a business licence, property rights or other legal status in the informal economy are debilitating constraints on growth and job creation because there is no access to capital with associated lower borrowing costs that can leveraged and invested in productive enterprises.

Second, it is clear that labour market flexibility – and labour mobility – will be increasingly important in the coming decades. The pace of technological innovation is increasing in a wide range of activities, including communication, production, transportation, and other areas; this has significant implications for the type of jobs that will be needed, what the work will be and where it will be done. In this environment, workforce participants will need to adapt to increasing change: new jobs, new ways of working and new locations. This will require flexible labour markets to enable both employers and employees to adapt to changing aspects of work. Rigid job definitions and labour markets will increasingly be at odds with the way work is being organized and carried out. The clearest strategy to get ahead of this trend is to promote appropriate education, skills training, and lifelong learning to improve employability and create an adaptive workforce.

Lastly, the ILO must work with its member States to close the “implementation gap”: the differences

between national law and practice and ratified ILO standards. Addressing this gap should be a top priority of the ILO. When an ILO member State ratifies an ILO Convention, it takes on a human rights obligation to protect its citizens. States violate their human rights obligations, even with respect to ILO technical standards, where they fail to take steps to prevent, investigate, punish and redress violations. Although States usually have discretion in deciding upon these steps, they should consider the full range of preventative and remedial measures “in accordance with national law and practice”, including policies, legislation, regulation, collective bargaining and a free and unbiased judiciary. States have the duty to protect and promote the rule of law, including taking measures to ensure equality before the law, fairness in its application, and by providing adequate accountability, legal certainty, and procedural and legal transparency. This is in keeping with the Protect, Respect, Remedy Framework and Guiding Principles which the United Nations Human Rights Council is expected to adopt later this month.

In conclusion, we stress the need for sound macroeconomic policies with a conducive environment for doing business, flexible labour markets, and States fulfilling their duty to protect the human rights and civil liberties of their citizens. Freedom from want and protection of rights go hand in hand.

(The Conference adjourned at 1.20 p.m.)

Sixth sitting

Thursday, 9 June 2011, 2.30 p.m.

President: Mr Lima Godoy

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

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT

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

Original Spanish: Mr ECHAVARRÍA (Employer, Colombia)

As regards the Director-General's Report, I would like to highlight his interest in seeking solutions to unemployment, which has increased throughout the world since the international financial crisis, and has hit young people especially hard. The specificities of each country lead us to conclude that there is no standard solution, and the inflexible application of international standards cannot produce results. The opportunities afforded by recent conferences for heads of State and international experts to put forward their own experience provide useful alternatives for countries implementing credit, monetary, exchange, fiscal or vocational training policies with a view to stimulating investment, confidence and employment.

I would like to refer specifically to the recent events which have occurred in my own country in the social and labour field. The tripartite agreement supplementing that signed in 2006, for which the ILO shares part of the credit, marked an important step forward in social dialogue. The agreement incorporated – and indeed exceeded – the proposals of the high-level ILO mission that visited Colombia recently.

Strengthening labour institutions to make room for a ministry solely responsible for labour is something that the trade union confederations have been demanding for a long time, and now this has been made a reality by the Act on the subject recently approved by the Congress of the Republic.

The technical assistance provided by the ILO in the past few weeks has been critical in setting up the new institution.

It is also worth mentioning that the agreement addressed an item on which consensus had been reached among all the participants in the National Commission on Wage and Labour Policies, that is, strengthening labour inspection to promote, monitor and supervise the proper exercise of the labour rights and obligations of employers and workers. We note with satisfaction that the recent agreement provides for 480 new inspectors – an increase of

almost double the current number. This is accompanied by induction and training programmes for inspectors to ensure that actions produce concrete results, in response to those criticizing the system as ineffectual or inadequate. With the adoption of the Act on formalizing and generating employment at the end of the previous year, unnecessary procedures with the Ministry were eliminated to free up more time for inspectors to devote to duties outside their offices.

Current and future inspection plans should be geared to promoting mutual respect in labour relations between employers and workers and ensuring that the social partners identify common ground for the sake of sustainability of enterprises, which is the basis for the development of other labour rights. Without enterprises, there is no employment, no trade union, no collective bargaining.

Another important aspect of the agreement is the willingness of the parties to add more resources and improve the protection provided by the State of Colombia to trade unionists, not only to increase their number but to cover workers in the process of establishing a trade union. The aim is also to protect former trade unionists whose personal safety or that of their families may be threatened on account of their past trade union activity. We employers are joining forces to ensure that the preservation of life and the free exercise of labour rights are respected in a respectable democracy like Colombia.

Just as important is the provision in the agreement for strengthening the Office of the Attorney-General to add 95 new investigators to join the 19 prosecutors assigned solely to the task of solving crimes against trade union activists and leaders. We are convinced that this will result in crimes being solved, thus further enhancing the climate of truth, justice, reparation and non-repetition which is already being created.

The National Employers' Association of Colombia (ANDI) has carried out a detailed assessment, based entirely on the judicial decisions handed down up to the end of 2010, and has noted the enormous discrepancy between the international complaints presented by trade union confederations and some non-governmental organizations at national and international levels and procedural truth. Our study was given to the high-level mission, and we hope that this will be a useful document in building national social and labour relations.

The recent agreement contains major advances, all in favour of the workers, whether or not they are unionized. We employers consider that such agree-

ments are aimed at presenting Colombia as a society that is moving forward in the international context, that is as good as or better than many countries in the world, that allows the free exercise of trade union rights, that is transforming its institutions in a patriotic spirit, and that wants to be part of the economic networks afforded by globalization, for the economic and social well-being of all Colombians.

Mr FARRUGIA (*Employer, Malta*)

The occasion of the 100th Session of the ILO Conference gives cause for reflection, a time to look back and evaluate the achievements and failures of this house throughout its history. In his Report, *A new era of social justice*, the Director-General aptly states that "...we are the heirs of a proud past and the caretakers of a difficult present,...". There is no question that the struggle against poverty and to improve the living and working conditions of the world's citizens is an ongoing challenge, and that the current state of affairs in the world is ample proof that the work of the ILO is far from being complete.

The tripartite model of social dialogue has made a tangible difference in the world of work through the principles and standards that it has established in the Decent Work Agenda. It has also been instrumental in designing responses to the international crisis through the Global Jobs Pact. The relevance of the ILO's fundamental principles and rights at work, and the institution's potential to contribute to the positive outcomes of globalization, were also recognized in the G20 Leaders Statement issued at the Pittsburgh Summit in 2009.

However, the Report seems to blame all the world's evils on the market economy, claiming that dominant economic policy "...overvalued the capacities of markets to self-regulate, undervalued the role of the State, public policy and regulations and devalued respect for the environment, the dignity of work and the social service and welfare functions in society."

It also recommends global remedies when it is clear that patients suffer from different symptoms. The economic and social situation varies substantially between countries and proposing more progressive tax systems across the board, for example, can destabilize economies rather than stimulate growth. This would also incentivize an expansion of the informal sector, which would certainly not be beneficial to the workers affected. Proposing a more progressive tax system is definitely not recommended for Malta. Increasing the role of the State and social spending – as the Report suggests – can be wasteful and unsustainable. Irrespective of the financial crisis, many governments accumulated debts through years of chronic deficits which unavoidably translated into budget cuts and austerity measures. Welfare systems can only be sustainable if they are managed efficiently and funded through an expansion of the formal economy and private enterprise. Financing an inefficient public sector through increased taxation is a recipe for higher deficits and bears bitter fruit for society as a whole in future.

The Report also generalizes about responsible governance and the financial services sector. Malta did not suffer from a financial meltdown, due to the prudence and good governance of our financial institutions. It is agreed, however, that the financial services sector should be at the service of the real

economy, not the other way around, in particular, enabling an environment that sustains private enterprise and providing financial resources to small enterprises.

Another generalization in the Report concerns flexible labour markets, which are judged as being a crucial characteristic of inefficient growth. No distinction is made between precarious work and atypical employment. Atypical employment, if supported by labour legislation, does not lead to an erosion of employees' rights, rather, it is a response to an increasing demand for alternative work organization by some segments of the labour force that seek to strike a balance between work and family life, or to remain active in the labour force after retirement. It is also necessary to increase the activity rates in view of demographic challenges affecting the labour supply.

Most people on atypical employment contracts in Malta, for example, part-timers, employees on reduced hours, employees on fixed-term contracts, enjoy the same rights at law as others with full-time indefinite employment contracts and they do not consider their work to be precarious. It is one of the functions of labour administration and labour inspection to ensure that employees' rights, irrespective of the type of employment relationship, are respected and that there are policies in place to enforce implementation and compliance with labour regulations. This principle is publicly supported by Maltese employers and is part of the healthy debate on the matter being discussed during this Conference.

Labour flexibility is also instrumental in enabling our economy to adapt itself to accelerated global market changes, given that we have one of the most open economies in the world. These changes have highlighted the need for adjustments, to shift labour from areas where jobs have been lost, to ones with potential for expansion and higher value added. These transitions are sometimes painful, and policy options are difficult. For example, the restructuring of our national airline to steer it towards a sustainable and profitable path is inevitable and may have an impact on thousands of families in Malta. However, as has happened in similar circumstances in the past, I am convinced that, with the social dialogue structures which we have in place, the social partners will face this challenge and formulate a solution that works in the national interest.

I end my address by affirming that the remedy for the current ailments in the world: youth unemployment; poverty; poor labour standards; occupational health and safety; and others, certainly does not lie in giving up on the market economy and to propose a shift away from a policy paradigm which is both discredited and inefficient, as mentioned in paragraph 178, on a global scale. A more efficient response is to utilize the ILO's resources and expertise to help design and support national policy responses that address specific economic and labour market issues facing its constituent partners. The ILO is equipped with a solid tripartite structure that is empowered to address policy issues related to labour markets and the workplace. Abandoning this critical niche in favour of involving itself in a wider range of issues threatens to dilute the impact which this institution can make on a global stage.

I feel particularly privileged to be part of this important gathering for the first time. This is particularly so because this year the International Labour Conference is celebrating its 100th jubilee. Even though I am new in this field, I think we should all pat ourselves on the back for the 100 years of successful performance in contributing to social justice and peace and, most importantly, economic development throughout the world. I therefore strongly feel that, as we celebrate this 100th jubilee, we should step back and take stock of our achievements as well as our challenges, and pave the way forward.

Let me now turn to the issues that are under consideration during this Conference. Last year, the Conference once more demonstrated the maturity of democracy within this Organization by successfully adopting the Recommendation on domestic work, despite strong differing opinions on regulating this sector. This time around, it is my hope that participants from countries that have already begun regulating this sector will share their experiences. In my country, we have already agreed that this sector has to be protected through special regulations instead of under the principal labour legislation.

By the same token, the discussion on social security will also enable those members who are struggling to establish comprehensive social security systems to learn from the best practices of other member States. I am encouraged by the fact that the ILO now recognizes the various forms of social assistance programmes provided by different countries through the concept of the Social Protection Floor. My delegation's understanding of the Social Protection Floor is that the ILO recognizes and acknowledges the efforts made by governments throughout the world to improve the lives of the most vulnerable members of society. The Government of Lesotho fully recognizes and acknowledges responsibility towards its citizens by providing a comprehensive social security scheme. We shall therefore look to the ILO for support and guidance and we would like to express our appreciation for the support that we have received so far.

Lastly, I would like to express our support and appreciation of the discussions on the theme of strengthening labour administration systems and inspections. We also welcome the establishment of the labour administration and labour inspection system at ILO headquarters; I am proud to announce that some of us are already reaping good results from this development. In May this year, the ILO, in conjunction with Better Work Lesotho, successfully held a workshop for labour inspectors. This training workshop was carried out in response to the second Decent Work Country Programme, which states improvement of labour inspections as one of its desired outcomes. We are therefore going to use the report of the committee to build on the work that we have achieved in labour administration and labour inspection.

At this juncture, allow me to acknowledge the tremendous work carried out by the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations. Their tireless work has contributed to the protection of the human rights of our people in the working arena.

In closing, I would like to reiterate my earlier remarks regarding the commitment of this Organiza-

tion and Conference in strengthening democracy and building social peace. On this note, I would like to conclude my remarks by wishing everyone successful discussions in all the committees.

Original Azeri: Mr MOHBALIYEV (Worker, Azerbaijan)

Allow me to share our views about the Report of the Director-General. There are proper policy, legislative texts and mechanisms in force to solve discrimination for all citizens in Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan ratified Convention No. 100 (equal remuneration) and Convention No. 111 (discrimination in employment and occupation) in 1992; Convention No. 156 (workers with family responsibilities) and Convention No. 183 (maternity protection) were ratified in 2010.

Furthermore, Azerbaijan acceded to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women in 1995, and to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination in 1996. Azerbaijan signed up to a number of Articles of the European Social Charter in 2004.

The relevant clauses regarding such matters are enshrined in the Constitution of the Azerbaijan Republic, the Labour Code and the Law on gender equality, and in other normative acts at the national level.

As a result of the implementation of legislation on gender equality, gender-related issues have been addressed in national policies and led to the improvement of the welfare of the people and the positive changes in the employment sphere.

According to statistics, male workers total 61 per cent in the economy, women account for 39 per cent, although women's employment is increasing day by day. According to 2010 statistics, the employment rate of women aged between 15 and 56 years was about 66 per cent. In spite of the fact that this indicator has increased over previous years, this percentage is less than the general employment level, which is 64.4 per cent, while men's employment level is 73.4 per cent. The percentage of women hired in industrial sectors of the economy has decreased by 8.3 per cent in the past years, and in 2009 it was 22.2 per cent.

The discrepancy between these indicators and European standards is of much concern to us. On the other hand, in some cases applying new standards takes different time in different countries owing to mindset and customs.

I also want to note that the level of informal employment has increased recently, particularly among women. In 2005, the percentage of women in the informal employment sector constituted 32 per cent. However, the rate rose to 61 per cent in 2009. The unemployment level among women was 9.8 per cent in 2003. However, that dropped to 7.2 per cent in 2010. A total of 14.9 per cent of natural persons without legal status were women in our Republic in 2009. The average percentage of women working in leading positions in state and private sectors was over 10 per cent within the last decade.

Differences in wages are decreasing. Nowadays, monthly wages for women amount to 50-55 per cent of men's. The average monthly wages for women are higher than men in air traffic control (for example). The increase continued in 2008.

Women work mostly in the healthcare and education sectors. The number of women in the health-

care sector amounts to 76 per cent of the general staff, and the rate is 67 per cent in education.

The Azerbaijan Trade Union Confederation takes an active part in providing equal conditions for Azerbaijani citizens at the workplace. A general tripartite agreement was signed between the Cabinet of the Azerbaijan Republic, the Azerbaijan Trade Union Confederation and the National Confederation of Employers of the Republic, for the period 2010-11, as a result of trade union efforts in this respect. This was intended to provide men and women with the same wages for a similar job, meet health and safety standards by taking into account natural reproductive cycles of women, to promote

the improvement of professional skills and make new occupations available to women, particularly women between the ages of 20 and 30 years.

Thus the Azerbaijan Trade Union Confederation was able to increase the role of women in the trade union movement. The total number of female members was over 38 per cent in 2000 and more than 50 per cent in 2010.

We hope that our programmes and policy of social partnership on issues of discrimination will help improve the position of women at the workplace and create equal possibilities for citizens in general.

(The Conference adjourned at 3 p.m.)

Seventh sitting

Thursday, 9 June 2011, 5.25 p.m.

Presidents: Mr Hernández Sánchez and Mr Lima Godoy

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

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT

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

Original French: Ms NGOMA (*Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Welfare, Gabon*)

It is an honour and privilege for me to take the floor before this august assembly at the 100th Session of the International Labour Conference. I would like to congratulate the President on his brilliant election to preside over this assembly. It is an honour for Africa and for Cameroon, in particular for an elder statesman among Ministers of Labour. I assure the President and the Officers that they can count on our cooperation throughout their mandate.

I would also like to pay a well-deserved tribute to Mr Juan Somavia, Director-General of the International Labour Office, for his efforts to achieve the objectives of our Organization.

In presenting his Report on the state of the world of work after the financial crisis, entitled *A new era for social justice*, the Director-General raised a number of relevant points. He voiced the legitimate demands of youth, asking leaders in business, politics, civil society and international organizations to agree on actions and policies that “give us a fair chance at a decent job”.

It is time for us to hear their cry and to respond to their distress. I do not have a miracle solution, but I do know that we have to join our efforts, to be fully aware that how we deal with the very difficult issue of youth unemployment is going to have implications for the credibility – if not the very survival – of democracy and global governance.

From this standpoint, our Conference is fertile ground for debate on how to make youth employment a universal, concrete objective.

On the African continent, the problem is even more acute. Recent events have shown this very clearly. In many cases there is a mass exodus of youth from rural to urban areas, and from our countries to other regions of the world, where they meet with many different fates.

Youth is the hope of the future – hope to build our economy and tomorrow’s society. Investing in youth will enable Africa to sustainably address the

imbalances that gave rise to the crises that we have experienced.

There is an urgent need for credible solutions – in the form of training, entrepreneurship, provision of equal opportunities for employment, information systems or labour market analysis.

The forthcoming summit of Heads of State and Government in Africa to be held in Equatorial Guinea on the theme of “Accelerating the independence of young people for sustainable development” will provide another opportunity to deal with this very universal issue of youth employment.

Our country is committed to implementing a policy for decent and productive employment, as a priority target under the Millennium Development Goals and a means of eradicating extreme poverty. This commitment, in line with the ILO’s ideals, was made at the highest level of our State by His Excellency Ali Bongo Ondimba, the President of the Republic and the Head of State, as a priority for his action and that of his Government. The social partners and young people themselves are actively involved in seeking innovative solutions to these problems.

With regard to the standard-setting item on domestic work that has been submitted for second discussion, it is our view that labour standards should be extended to this category of workers, the vast majority of whom work in the informal economy. Greater attention should be paid to women, who are often low-skilled and victims of ill-treatment in the complex situations in which they work.

It is also important for the draft instruments to meet certain concerns we have, to provide greater protection to all of those who work in this area and to ensure enough flexibility to enable wide ratification and application of this Convention. As was the case during the first discussion, our country remains in favour of adopting new instruments.

A few months ago my country ratified Convention No. 138, completing its process of commitment to the core Conventions of the ILO. Some of the provisions of our Labour Code have been amended, and others have been introduced in order to meet the needs of an evolving world of work.

I read the Global Report with interest this year and I share the view that this body is going to have to state very clearly that the principle of non-discrimination in employment and occupation is inherent in human rights, and is the cornerstone of a more just society. Yet we see that there are still wage gaps between men and women, and that sexual harassment is a very serious problem in the

workplace. Young women who are financially dependent, single, divorced, or migrant workers are all more and more vulnerable, as are those with disabilities and those living with HIV/AIDS.

In that regard, the Gabonese Government, under the high auspices of the President of the Republic, has taken a number of very important measures to halt the growth of HIV/AIDS and achieve the MDG in this area by 2015.

Without prejudging the issue of the debates that are under way with regard to the budget, and while I cannot hide my concern with regard to the reductions in the budget of our Organization, I firmly believe that technical assistance programmes should be maintained and the role of the regional offices should be strengthened. In other words solidarity and cooperation must be maintained, and I am confident that the negotiations that we have just begun in order to draw up our own Decent Work Country Programme will yield results within a reasonable time.

I cannot conclude without saying a few words on social protection, for which Gabon fully supports the adoption of a new instrument. In an extension of social protection, the Government is facing a serious challenge in providing universal social coverage and access to health, thanks to the implementation and strengthening of synergies between our National Social Security Fund and the National Health Insurance and Social Guarantee Fund.

(Mr Lima Godoy takes the Chair.)

Mr NGATJIZEKO (*Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, Namibia*)

It is an honour and privilege for me to once again address the International Labour Conference, not just as the head of the tripartite Namibian delegation, but also in my capacity as Chair of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Employment and Labour Sector, and the African Union Labour and Social Affairs Commission.

In my address to the 99th Session of the International Labour Conference in 2010, I spoke about recognition for reform of the ILO to effect a more equitable geographical representation in order to remain representative, transparent and accountable, especially within the spirit of social justice and equity, which the ILO itself so strongly promotes.

This year, at the SADC Employment and Labour Sector Meeting of Ministers and Social Partners, held in March in Windhoek, and at the African Union Labour and Social Affairs Commission Meeting of Ministers held in Yaoundé in April, there was tripartite consensus among all attending African members States on the urgent need for the ratification of the 1986 Amendment to the ILO Constitution.

Under the Amendment, Government representatives would be distributed among four geographic regions (Africa, America, Asia and Europe) and 54 seats would be allocated among regions in accordance with the number of member States, their population and economic activity, assessed by appropriate criteria. The initial distribution would be as follows: Africa, 13; America, 12; Asia and Europe, alternatively 15 and 14 seats.

There are at present 54 African member States among the 183 ILO member States and, as you are aware, Africa has no non-elected representation in the Governing Body.

In April 2007, as you might be aware, the 11th ILO African Regional Meeting adopted a unanimous resolution to ensure that Africa's representation corresponded to its numerical and strategic importance, which is also in conformity with the Ezuwini Consensus of 2005 on the Common African Position on the Proposed Reform of the United Nations.

In addition, during the 2009 Session of the International Labour Conference, the Non-Aligned Movement reaffirmed its support for the ratification of the 1986 Amendment to the ILO Constitution.

At present, 95 countries have ratified the Amendment, and 27 more are needed to achieve the two-thirds majority of members. However, only two of the members of chief industrial importance, namely India and Italy, have ratified the Amendment so far.

Namibia ratified the 1986 Amendment in 1997; once again, I would call on all ILO member States who have not done so to ratify the Amendment as a matter of urgency, in particular countries of chief industrial importance.

It is my sincere hope that the second discussion on decent work for domestic workers will culminate in the adoption of a Convention, supplemented by a Recommendation, at the end of the Conference. It would be a very fitting end to this landmark 100th Session of the International Labour Conference.

In Namibia, domestic work has been identified as a sector in need of the introduction of a minimum wage in order to address the low income that more often than not characterizes remuneration for these workers. We look forward to the new standard, which we trust will provide valuable guidance to member States in addressing the employment challenges associated with insecure employment, excessively long working hours and abusive working relations.

The work of the Committee responsible for the recurrent discussion on the strategic objective of social protection (social security) under the follow-up to the 2008 ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization is of special interest to my delegation, in view of current developments in Namibia.

The Social Security Commission of Namibia, under Social Security Act No. 34 of 1994, is responsible for providing payment of maternity leave benefits, sick leave benefits and death benefits to employees; establishing the maternity leave, sick leave and death benefits fund; payment of medical benefits to employees; payment of pension benefits to retired employees; establishing the proposed national pension fund; and funding training schemes for disadvantaged, unemployed persons and establishing, for that purpose, the development fund.

Apart from making payments to implement maternity leave, sick leave and death benefit, the Social Security Commission, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare is currently hard at work implementing the development fund. As recently as three weeks ago, the Social Security Commission presented proposals on the implementation of the national pension fund. We therefore, look forward with interest to the conclusion of this Committee.

I would like to conclude by expressing the support of my delegation, to the Yaoundé Tripartite Declaration on the implementation of the Social Protection Floor. The impact of social protection on the

eradication of poverty is undeniable and it is our duty as governments to extend it to the citizens of our respective countries, in particular the poor and the vulnerable.

Original Portuguese: Mr LISBOA (Worker, Brazil)

This is an historic Conference. We are here to adopt the Convention on domestic work, a sector which employs 7 million workers in Brazil alone.

It is quite an achievement to be holding the 100th Session of the Conference. Moreover, the agenda is, as ever, made up of contemporary issues which prove that the Conference plays a relevant role in an ever-more complex and multi-polar international community. The ILO continues to look to the future, while preserving values dear to humanity.

The Organization is faced with the contradictions and social issues which have arisen from the process of unfair globalization. At the same time, the ILO reaffirms its basic values, seeking full employment and struggling for social justice, with tripartism as a basis for social dialogue. The Director-General's Report serves as a signpost, directing us down this path.

This Report is a courageous analysis of the historic times we have been living in since the 2008 financial crisis. This framework shows that the ILO must coordinate international efforts to make a new era of social justice a reality.

This Organization has a significant role to play in the process of globalization, since Governments and other social actors who are represented in it will have to take a lead in dealing with the challenges before us. Ever since the establishment of the ILO, its international standards have borne the hallmarks of social dialogue. This has been the major contribution of the ILO to the international stage. Among the various points raised by the Report, I should like to highlight a number of issues of particular relevance to Brazilian workers.

The report correctly states that the global crisis brought on by the financial system finally buried the truths "sold" as part of the models shaped by the Washington Consensus and the worship of the deity that was the market. The countries which broke the limits imposed by the macroeconomic policy dictated by those models, one of which was Brazil, recovered from the crisis more quickly and got back on the path of growth.

A number of the anti-Washington Consensus policies should be highlighted, including the regulation and monitoring of the financial system, the extension of credit to the real economy, income distribution and the reduction of the informal market through the creation of decent jobs. In Brazil, the voice of the workers was heard, that is to say, the social dialogue played a central role in the formulation of policies.

However, as soon as indicators showed that the crisis was diminishing, a number of countries began to re-implement the failed policies which had got them into trouble in the first place. What is worse, when they re-adopted this economic model, which had been discredited by history, these countries subjected their workers to the negative effects of fiscal austerity, unemployment and the withdrawal of rights.

The Report of the Director-General points out that, although we do not yet have a new set of policies with which to replace the neo-liberal model which has led several countries to ruin, we are

nonetheless well aware that there are certain paths it is better not to take. We certainly should not follow the neo-liberal model.

We must therefore call for international regulation of the financial system, so that it can again finance efficient and sustainable productive activities, as pointed out by the Director-General, ensuring sustainable growth, generating decent work, promoting the green economy, youth employment policies and equal opportunities for men and women. In a nutshell, those activities that will contribute to this much desired new era of social justice.

The ILO must continue in its role as a staunch defender of tripartism. The Organization must, however, begin this work at home, guaranteeing tripartite monitoring and transparency with regard to internal decision-making processes. This is something which has been discussed at the United Nations and now the time has come for similar reforms to be undertaken regarding the decision-making bodies of the ILO.

There must be discussions on reforms that would make the Organization more equitable in terms of tripartite action, as well as more transparent and efficient. The ILO also needs to get back to standards-setting, one good example of this being the preparation of the new Convention on domestic work.

At the same time, the ILO's political and administrative structures must, as a matter of urgency, reflect the new multi-polar reality of our world. We need to ensure a better balance in terms of the representation of North and South.

The ILO was established to set standards and monitor their implementation. This is what millions of workers expect of the Organization. The time has come to take risks and to propose new stands which respond effectively to the new realities and challenges posed by globalization.

Mr SAID (Parliamentary Secretary for Consumers, Fair Competition, Local Councils and Public Dialogue, Office of the Prime Minister, Malta)

It is an honour and privilege for me, as Parliamentary Secretary responsible for industrial and employment relations, to once again take this opportunity to address the International Labour Conference, this time at its 100th Session. This is indeed a historic moment for the ILO.

It is also a difficult moment for the world economy. The Reports of the Director-General have become eye-openers for us all.

This year our attention is focused on social justice. The gains from economic growth are not spread evenly and may contribute to social injustice. We are bound together by a harsh economic climate. The energies of governments worldwide are concentrated on dealing urgently with different crises, some undoubtedly man-made. We sometimes appear to be too focused on reversing economic recessions at the cost of other priorities. This is important, but we must not lose sight of the whole picture: the underlying principles of equality and solidarity, and of the importance of the dignity of the individual.

Economic development, however important, should not come at the expense of social justice. We must remain true to our guiding principles of having a fair and just society, a society built on giving each individual in each region, nation and continent, the necessary supportive framework in terms of educa-

tion, equality, health, human rights and job opportunities, and to allow persons to realize their full potential.

The reality on the ground is somewhat different. It is not rosy. Inequality is being reversed too slowly. Social and political upheavals grab the attention of the world media for a short while, before falling below their radar even though they continue to fester. A lot still needs to be done on the environmental front. The social and employment impacts of the current economic and financial crisis remain with us. Income inequalities remain. While the global economy has started a very slow and fragile recovery, there is justifiable concern that governments and institutions may be tempted to return to a “business-as-usual” mode.

Adopting such a mindset means that the key reasons which gave rise and continue to cause widespread inequality and imbalances remain. A catastrophe has been averted. But, not taking action to change the course which led us into difficult waters and to adopt suitable policies that allow sustainable development is not an option. It guarantees that it is only a matter of time before the next economic and social crisis appears. The next crisis may find us less prepared. The risk of this happening, in the absence of preventive action aimed at addressing imbalances in social justice and the consequent costs to our societies, are too high.

There is a pressing need to review long-standing economic policies to ensure efficient growth and that due consideration and importance are given to the social and environmental aspects and the individual. Decent work deficits need to be addressed. Action is required to strengthen the framework for productive investment, to better regulate the financial markets, to promote inclusive and fair labour markets, and to adopt appropriate macroeconomic policies.

We must strive to eradicate any prevailing discriminatory practices that curtail female participation in the labour market. While recognizing that there has been a significant increase in female participation, we cannot be completely satisfied with the circumstances of female employment.

As governments, we continue to be faced with the need to take tough and possibly unpopular decisions. Citizens are the priority in policy-making and it is essential that individuals feel that their voice and concerns are being heard and given weight. Social partner consultation remains a vital tool in shaping policies which have an effect on the workplace in particular and the workings of society in general.

As a country, Malta has embraced the views of the social partners by adopting a job-centred strategy, sometimes at enterprise level, in response to the recession and to the difficulties affecting our workplaces. This has had the desired outcome of limiting job losses and social strife. But concerns remain about the fragility of the current recovery process and the intertwining of the global economy.

In assisting countries to channel their energies on what needs to be done to improve equality and solidarity, the ILO can be proud of having a proven track record over several decades. It has not only highlighted concerns but, through effective tripartism, has helped to formulate policies that served as a compass to help navigate the best course through troubled waters. The development of labour standards, the Decent Work Agenda and its work on the

social dimension of globalization come readily to mind.

There is widespread international appreciation that the ILO has implemented its mandate well. It has been a leader. I am sure that the necessary collaboration will be forthcoming from all parties to help develop strategies to try to deliver a new pattern of efficient growth to help us get closer to our goals: decent work opportunities and social justice for all.

Ms KABAKA (*Minister for Labour and Employment, United Republic of Tanzania*)

I would like to express my appreciation for the Global Report, *Equality at work: The continuing challenge*. While we appreciate the achievements underscored by the Report on the national policies and legislative frameworks that are in place to strengthen equity and social justice in the workplace, we also need to be decisive in taking appropriate and drastic action to address the major remaining challenges relating to equity at work and social justice.

As we read in the Report, women continue to suffer discrimination with regard to decent work opportunities, benefits, remuneration, terms and conditions of employment, access to decision-making positions, advances in education and particularly access to property ownership.

Discrimination against women is not only a violation of human dignity and justice, but it also denies them access to economic development and social progress. In this regard, we, the constituent partners, have a joint role to play in combating discrimination against women.

Articles 22 and 23 of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania provide for the right to work and just remuneration. The United Republic of Tanzania has ratified all eight core ILO Conventions, including the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), and the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111). The Employment and Labour Relations Act No. 6 of 2004, prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender, sex, age, marital status, disability, pregnancy or HIV/AIDS.

The Government is committed to implementing policies, programmes and legal frameworks relating to gender equality, and there has been a focus on the enhancement of women’s legal capacity, their economic and political empowerment and poverty reduction.

I would like to express the Government’s appreciation for the Office’s technical and financial support in the implementation of the One UN Joint Programme, which seeks to address issues of maternity and paternity protection rights in the workplace, and to note that many of these interventions have had a positive effect on decent work.

The Second Decent Work Country Programme approved by the Governing Body will undoubtedly foster the promotion of maternity rights and benefits in the United Republic of Tanzania.

We all understand that a number of challenges, such as the war against HIV and AIDS throughout the world, still remain. There is a need for concerted efforts to achieve the desired goals. The Office has made progress in terms of policy support. We continue to encourage the Office to increase their support and extend technical cooperation over the coming decade.

Employment is vital to human progress and social equity. Creating employment opportunities for our people should be at the heart of our social and economic policies. Youth employment and youth unemployment are big challenges and, if not properly addressed, could jeopardize world peace and stability. We have witnessed this negative trend in some parts of the world. We therefore urge member States to put in place viable and dynamic strategies to tackle the problem. The Office should provide technical support to member States to achieve the desired objectives.

With regard to the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories, the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania would like to encourage parties to the conflict to initiate round table discussions, as it is the only means of creating the conditions for lasting peace between Israel and Palestine.

Mr ZARB (*Worker, Malta*)

I would like to praise the Director-General for his Report, in which he touches upon the principle of social justice as an effective way forward to confront the inefficient growth patterns that have increased inequality throughout the world.

This year, we are present at the 100th Session of this assembly since the creation of the ILO in the year 1919. It is therefore worthwhile to take this occasion to look back and revisit what the ILO has achieved over a span of 92 years. I am sure that all of us here today will feel proud of ourselves for such achievements.

The ILO has been instrumental in combating global poverty and child labour; however, much work needs to be done. Nonetheless, the ILO must be applauded for what it has managed to accomplish, and should be encouraged further to continue its sterling work to consign global poverty and child labour to the history books.

Social justice and decent work are at the core of the ILO. Sadly, we are witnessing the weakening of social justice in many ways, in many countries – to the extent that decent work is being transformed into precarious work with indecent conditions and pay.

It is clear that the trend of precarious work with indecent conditions will not cease as long as governments continue to introduce neoliberal policies in the name of competitiveness and for the sake of a freer market economy.

In my country, we have often been subjected to hearing that our national economy is expanding and that our GDP is on the rise. We have been told that the fiscal and economic policies introduced helped Malta to overcome the effects of the international financial and economic crisis. On the other hand, the reality shows us a different picture. Precarious work in my country is increasing and furthering unfair work practices.

Several workers within the security, cleaning and caring sectors are afraid of losing their job if ever they try to organize in a trade union. This situation is very annoying as it is happening even though the freedom of association is entrenched in our Constitution. Moreover, quite a lot of non-unionized workers in these sectors are being forced to register as self-employed as a precondition for employment.

Adding to this, the rise in government-induced costs, such as utility bills and fuel prices, have brought a situation whereby such costs have also

had a very wide negative impact, hitting directly at the purchasing power of wages and pensions.

Notwithstanding this prevailing situation, unfortunately little has been done to correct it. For its part, the General Workers' Union (GWU) is prepared to work with all the parties involved in search of the best solutions in the interests of our country, workers and pensioners.

In this context, the GWU is committed to doing its utmost and will not cease its efforts until the Government changes its present course. In view of this, the GWU has embarked on a campaign labelling the Government as insensitive and heartless, so as to bring the Government to its senses and to improve the state of the workers' families who are finding it very hard to make ends meet.

Original Arabic: Mr ABU EL RAGHEB (Employer, Jordan)

The employers of Jordan have noted the Director-General's Report discussing the ILO's activities for the international community on decent work, combating child labour and forced labour, promoting social dialogue, collective negotiations, training, participation of women in the labour force, and promoting tripartism and representation of all partners, as well as social justice.

The employers of Jordan welcome the efforts being taken by your Organization and wish to achieve these goals in collaboration with the parties concerned.

Jordan, under the leadership of His Majesty King Abdullah II, has adopted a truly collaborative approach with the private and public sectors, in order to adopt strategic policies and strategies which aim at improving the situation of both workers and employers thanks to mechanisms for promoting social dialogue. The recently created Economic and Social Council has undertaken studies and on the basis of these studies has given advice to the Government regarding draft legislation. It has started dialogue with civil society institutions and enabled us to draw up a national employment strategy.

We are now adopting a global plan to reform employment, training, professional training and technical training, under the supervision of the Ministry of Labour, through the intermediary of the Council for Education and Employment, and with representatives of the education sector and the private sector. The plan envisages restructuring of educational and vocational training establishments, creation of vocational guidance bodies, a follow up and assessment system, modernization of programmes, training for trainers and, for the vocational training system, links with the labour markets.

Employers' organizations have also established employment, training and human resource development services allowing them to participate effectively in training and educational programmes. We request that the ILO support these efforts.

A process of amending the Labour Code is under way with a view to bringing it into line with international labour standards and protecting the rights of workers and employers. In this respect, I would like to pay tribute to the important efforts made by the Organization in this sphere to establish standards applicable to all the tripartite partners.

These standards are flouted in the Arab territories occupied by the Israeli authorities, whose crimes in the West Bank and in Golan, their violations of workers' and employers' rights, the destruction of houses, cutting down of trees and construction of

the separation wall, all represent a violation of these standards, as the Zionist entity totally disregards what is happening in this and other organizations.

The crimes linked to the Gaza blockade and the repeated acts of aggression against Gaza, as well as the presence of more than 2 million people living in a restricted area without resources, without rights to a life in dignity and security, are a continued violation of international law.

I appeal to all free countries to support the Palestinian application for recognition of a Palestinian State within the 1967 borders. This application will be submitted to the United Nations next September.

Original French: Ms TOUNKARA (Minister of Labour and Public Service, Guinea)

The election of the President, which coincides with the 100th Session of the International Labour Conference, provides an excellent occasion to welcome and underscore all of the important progress that has been made in the world of work thanks to the indefatigable efforts of the tripartite partners of the ILO.

My delegation welcomes the salience of the agenda items of this session, as well as the quality of the documents that have been submitted to the committees by the Director-General, whose excellent intervention clearly underscored the different spheres and the complexity of the challenges which the international community must now face.

This agenda of our Conference, indeed, demonstrates the will of the International Labour Organization to respond to the numerous concerns of the international community caused by globalization, a type of globalization which does not offer the same opportunities for economic and social progress to all the peoples of the world.

Consideration of the reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General allows us to register progress made, as well as the need to continue efforts already begun, specifically in promoting and monitoring the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work as a factor of peace and stability in all of our States.

My country resolutely supports the ratification of the fundamental Conventions as well as their promotion. They constitute the leverage needed to ensure progress and the realization of the decent work objectives.

With regard to the recurrent discussion item on social protection, my delegation approves of the vision and the prospects stipulated in the Report of the Director-General. The issue of social protection represents an objective to be met by our States, who consider the right to social security as a human right.

Today, formulating policies with a view to enlarging and broadening the scope of social protection in our countries has proved to be a guarantor of social cohesion.

This implies ensuring that the entire population has a minimum level of security, income and access to healthcare, bearing in mind the economic and social development of our countries and their efforts to combat poverty and exclusion.

With this in mind, the development and establishment of a social protection policy for public servants, as well as public, private and informal sector workers, has become a priority for my country. And the task is urgent. We wish to have a dynamic in-

strument for social protection to cover all of our population.

It is clear that the diversity of social security regimes and systems, as well as the spread of their level of protection, clearly determines the ability of governments to react to difficulties ensuing from threats posed to their population, including the most vulnerable of the population and those suffering from HIV/AIDS.

The world is suffering from poverty, exclusion, socio-economic inequalities, and a lack of development. These are scourges, so many scourges that have been at the heart of the economic and financial crisis as well as the employment crisis. In such a context, the question of combating labour discrimination based on numerous dubious grounds must be the focus of our energy. For my delegation, overcoming these phenomena requires prioritizing strategies that integrate legislation, while strengthening institutional capacity.

The question of decent work for domestic workers was already the subject of interesting debates last year, and it was decided to go even deeper into the matter this year. In this respect, my delegation supports the adoption of a Convention which would protect domestic workers even more and we actively support the promotion of this.

To this end, we need to rely on institutional policies and frameworks that integrate employment and social security, as they would enable us to react more adequately to the true working conditions of domestic workers and the structural evolution of this section of society.

Moreover, my delegation welcomes the debate on labour administration and labour inspection, as they are structures that encourage social dialogue and the application of social and labour legislation; they also pave the way for the vital dialogue that preserves sound industrial relations.

My country has always been concerned by the situation in the occupied Arab territories. We require a just and sustainable solution to this situation, which would see the co-existence of a viable Palestinian State living side by side in peace with an Israeli State, within safe borders that are internationally recognized and accepted.

The renewal of the mandate of the Governing Body, during this session, gives me the opportunity to welcome, on behalf of my delegation and tripartite members, the excellent work that has been accomplished by the ILO under the clear leadership of its Director-General, Mr Juan Somavia, whose commitment to the cause of labour, peace, social justice, liberty and democracy requires our respect and our profound appreciation.

I could not conclude my statement without reiterating the gratitude of the people and the Government of Guinea to the ILO. We thank you for the support you have continued to give us throughout the socio-political crises, which marred the life of our nation up until the establishment of a Democratic State of Guinea.

In conclusion, I should like to reiterate the will of my Government to strengthen its cooperation with the ILO, as well as its determination to encourage social dialogue, as it helps us to achieve peace, progress and stability – things to which all Guineans are sincerely dedicated.

This is the first time I take the floor at such an august assembly, and at such a promising time for the future of Egypt and its workers after the great revolution of 25 January 2011. I wish to congratulate the Officers of the Conference on their election to this 100th Session of the International Labour Conference – a figure which reflects the experience and devotion of the ILO to its cause.

I wish, in this connection, to mention that the trade union movement in my country is more than a 112 years old, and that the setting up of our Federation in 1957 by the free will of its workers constitute a cornerstone in the trade union movement. This movement, which has existed for half a century, shows how much we are coherent and proves our unity. It is able to undertake many actions to improve the working conditions of its members. We still have much to do, and it is a source of pride for us to refer to the many agencies, cultural training and recreational institutions affiliated to our Federation for the benefit of our colleagues in the Arab world and African countries.

We are now facing new trade union elections before the end of this year. We look forward to the holding of these elections, which will be based on new legislative and organizational procedures, following the revolution of 25 January. They will be consistent with the aspirations of our workers for a democratic, independent and united Egypt, an Egypt that has achieved dignity, social justice and development.

It goes without saying that we appreciate the technical assistance provided by the ILO and we invite other concerned organizations and friends to do the same.

In this context, we wish to reaffirm that we believe in the trade union freedoms as a guarantee for our existence, and we hope that these rights will be exercised in a responsible way by the workers on the basis of dialogue, free choice and respect of the outcome of the elections.

From an overall standpoint, we are determined that the Federation shall be a strong organization for all workers of Egypt, in all sectors of activities. We hope that our organization will be open to everyone and incorporate all components of the trade union movement, without any exclusion or discrimination; an independent organization free from any administrative, political or religious dependency; an institutional organization that depends on no one and does not take personal matters into account.

I wanted to reassure all of you that the Egyptian Trade Union Federation is determined to fulfil its role in Egypt, the region and the world – despite calls for it to be divided up.

This session is being convened with the theme “Building a future with decent work” – and, we should like to add, social justice. This is what we gathered from the Director-General’s Report, *A new era of social justice*, which invites the developed countries to review the principle of globalization, followed for a number of decades, and which has always been against workers’ interests, especially in developing countries. At any rate, it cannot guarantee stability, justice and peace in the world.

In conclusion, I wish to commend the Director-General for following up the situation of the workers in the occupied Arab territories. He convinced us more than ever that the violations and racial and

repressive practices against the workers in these territories cannot stop unless occupation comes to an end, and we witness the creation of an independent Palestinian State.

We call upon the Organization and all those who believe in peace to support this cause and take all measures that were used against the apartheid regime in South Africa, and to lend aid to the Palestinian people in their quest for freedom, independence and dignity.

The challenges facing us today are more difficult and complex than we had to face in the past. The main challenge is the creation of conditions of decent work for all workers. Without this, the social justice referred to by Mr Juan Somavia, the Director-General of the ILO, will remain a vain idea.

Every year we note the growth of inequality throughout the world. Indeed not a day passes without indignant workers going out into the street to protest against the power of capital.

We thus have to recognize that our joint work has not been sufficiently effective. Of course without the efforts undertaken by the ILO the situation would have been worse. However, I believe that this is hardly a consolation for workers.

At the height of the crisis of 2009, the senior political figures of the European Union and everywhere else predicted the end of the age of inequality and said that the world would change. However, as soon as the crisis began to abate, it was business as usual, the unfair and unequal distribution of the fruits of labour continued, along with the exploitation of labour and the reduction in social protection.

But the real culprit – capital and above all financial capital – got away with a nasty fright while the real consequences were borne by the workers.

In the countries of Eastern Europe, over a long period, there had been a gradual degradation of the old social paradigms and the crisis completed the process of demolition through reforms. The financial institutions played a prominent part in this process.

The ILO has to resist actively the neoliberal ideology which has had such terrible consequence for labour. It must not meekly accept the demands of the IMF, which mean slashing social costs and do nothing to advance social justice.

At this 100th Session of the Conference, concrete measures are needed to reduce the growing gap in incomes and mitigate the social consequences of the reforms demanded by the IMF.

Ukraine has felt the results of the dictatorship of the IMF and its neoliberal reforms. Therefore, the Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine opposed IMF interference in the social, economic, budgetary, price and financial policies of our country. It was difficult for the Federation of Trade Unions to force the IMF to engage in dialogue, and in spite of our arguments, the IMF has not changed its position, even if it has changed tack slightly. Our Federation came forward with an ultimatum and said that if the IMF did not change its attitude we would adopt stringent measures in response.

But the IMF creates problems for many other European countries as well. Its leaders unashamedly want to become a “big 20” body seeking solutions to the world’s problems.

Ukraine’s current leaders have set themselves ambitious goals as regards the economy and social policy for the coming ten years. President, Victor

Yanukovich, has proposed new strategic orientations for social policy in the economic reform programme for 2010–14. For the first time since independence, Ukraine is drawing up a road map for social reforms.

Unfortunately, we have very serious foreign indebtedness left by the previous administration as a result of the ruined economy and the financial system. Social policy is poorly integrated into the general strategy for social and economic transformation. The Government's actions in the social sphere are rather last-minute measures, rather than a rounded set of policies aimed at achieving a decent and long-term increase in incomes.

The Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine has adopted a comprehensive decent work programme, which is in accordance with the President's own programme. We understand that raising living standards and reducing poverty and improving social stability are possible only with a comprehensive state policy and regulation in the social sphere based on effective social dialogue of the kind we are developing in Ukraine, and for which we hope for ILO support.

We hope that after this session of the Conference, governments, employers and trade unions, and above all the ILO, will develop new and less rigid ways of achieving our goals and enhancing the influence of the ILO. We must work more effectively and with a mind to results. For this we are ready.

Mr CHAKRABARTI (*Representative, Trade Unions International of Workers of the Building, Wood and Building Materials Industries*)

On behalf of the Trade Unions International of Workers of the Building, Wood and Building Materials Industries, the UITBB, which is affiliated to the World Federation of Trade Unions, we would like to thank the ILO for allowing us to address the Conference on the subject of certain burning problems affecting the construction, wood and building material industries' workers of the world.

Firstly, the problem of self-employed construction, wood, bricklaying and stone quarry workers in the informal sector – these workers, in both developed and developing countries, have barely any access to social security. Most of them are not covered by any social security network. If, exceptionally, in some countries these informal sector workers are covered by a social security scheme, including pension schemes, the reality is that in most cases these provisions are not respected by employers or governments. Quite often, the construction workers recruited by the multinational corporations on big construction projects in different countries are also not protected by the social security system. We expect the ILO to motivate the governments of different countries to include the millions of construction, wood and building materials industries' workers in social security schemes.

Secondly, the denial of trade union rights – in various countries in the world, construction and allied workers are being denied trade union rights, in particular the right to form trade unions and the right to collective bargaining. Governments are not taking any positive measures to guarantee these workers their trade union rights in practice. On the contrary, there are numerous examples of brutal violations of trade union rights and the persecution or killing of trade unionists in Colombia, Peru and the Philippines, as well as attempts to restrict union

rights, for example by the ABBC in Australia. We expect the ILO to denounce governments that do not comply with ILO core Conventions and to take steps to make sure that those governments respect trade union rights, in particular the freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining.

Thirdly, the health and safety issue – the construction industry is an accident-prone industry. Every year, an extremely high number of accidents take place in the industry all over the world. Health and safety problems are not addressed by the employers and although most governments across the world have drawn up excellent rules to ensure the health and safety of construction and wood industry workers, the proper implementation of this legislation is lacking. An endless chain of subcontractors, subcontracting, bogus self-employment, higher workloads – all these lead to hazardous conditions in the working arena.

Another related issue is the global ban on the production and use of asbestos and asbestos-containing products. At its 15th Congress in Brazil, the UITBB recently reiterated its full support for the global ban, and the need for an ILO Convention to ban asbestos. We expect the ILO to guarantee the health and safety of construction, wood and allied workers in an appropriate manner.

The fourth problem is that of migrant labour – as a result of the crisis of capitalism, growing poverty, unemployment and conflicts. There are growing migration flows, particularly involving young people who leave their home countries in search of employment and to have a better standard of living, and migrant workers are not being protected by national legislation in the receiving countries. Employment contracts are not being respected in many countries. These migrant workers are being denied trade union rights and are often treated like modern-day slaves.

The UITBB is of the view that the main role of the ILO is to protect the inalienable trade union, economic and social rights of these migrant workers. We would like to urge the ILO to be more open and democratic, to give due importance to all world trade union movements. The World Federation of Trade Unions, and the affiliated UITBB, must be given due importance at global level and operate on an equal footing with other actors.

Original Spanish: Mr CASTILLO (Worker, Uruguay)

The Director-General, in his Report on the occasion of this historic Conference, said that there was a need to champion a new era of social justice based and anchored on a strategy linked to an ideal of sustainable development in the area of social justice.

Uruguayan workers share the sentiments behind these words; indeed, they are mirrored in our own political strategic definitions, which were adopted at the last four congresses of the Trade Union Confederation of workers in our country, the PIT–CNT, from 2003 to the present day.

The Uruguayan workers have taken this as an objective, as a strategic focus, and believe that our demands and those of the Uruguayan people should aim at “An Uruguay based on productive development, with social justice and a fair distribution of wealth”.

We believe, in concurring with the Report of the Director-General, that the values and the policies of the ILO, especially the Decent Work Agenda, are more necessary than ever in a world emerging from

the crisis. Unfortunately, we also agree that in the case of the majority of major economies, as well as in the case of transnational capital, the strategic policies adopted reflect a way of acting and thinking that give the impression that nothing has happened, despite the fact that the consequences of the last crisis are becoming increasingly visible. The positions adopted in debates on the Global Jobs Pact and strategies to overcome the global crisis, which have taken place since 2009, seem to have been in vain.

For the workers of the world, hope has turned into disenchantment. As pointed out by the Secretary-General in his Report, the economies of the most developed countries, now that they have overcome the crisis, have gone back to the same old regressive policies that they had before, with an irresponsible call for structural adjustment, control and a systematic reduction in public investment and the removal, in many cases, of the approach called for in ratifying the Decent Work Agenda promoted by this Organization.

The Report proposes a strategy linked to actions that would move us towards an efficient growth model – which for Uruguayans means a productive investment programme with social justice, deepening democratic access to good services and adequate social security cover.

It is important that this model be implemented because it places the financial system at the service of the so-called real economy, thereby avoiding a repetition of the speculative policies in this sector of the economy which were largely responsible for many of the triggers to the last major financial crisis.

The Workers of Uruguay have examined what lies at the heart of these proposals, which reiterate the position taken by the ILO when it discussed the Global Jobs Pact in 2009, when it called upon us to commit ourselves and our efforts to making maximum use of the mechanisms and tools which could be linked to social dialogue, tripartism and collective bargaining.

Our country has been singled out by the highest representatives of this Organization, precisely for the importance and the effectiveness of its labour relations system, in both the public and the private sectors, which is expressed in a series of legal standards which reflect the desire for social dialogue and development in collective bargaining. Indeed, the system serves as an example at both regional and national level.

Labour relations in Uruguay can only be understood within the context of the values and policies of the ILO and the increasing need to develop and implement these standards.

This explains why we were so disconcerted when the Committee on the Application of Standards placed Uruguay in the dock, calling on our country to report on its voluntary and unrestricted adherence to these values, which have emerged from the ILO over many years and which we have espoused historically and on account of our personal convictions.

Those who brought the case against the Government of our country, questioning particular aspects of the law on collective bargaining in the private sector, are the same people singled out by the Director-General – those who are carrying on as if nothing had happened in Uruguay and who are seeking to unburden on the shoulders of the unprotected, the consequences of their own actions.

The Workers organized in the Uruguayan trade union movement will continue to defend the principles and the respects of the standards of the ILO and the advances achieved in terms of labour rights and social justice.

Original Arabic: Mr HABAB (Worker, Syrian Arab Republic)

On this occasion, we feel bound to refer to the Report of the Director-General on the situations of Arab workers of the Arab territories occupied by Israel in Palestine, in the Syrian Golan and in the Lebanese Shebaa farms. The workers and employers in these regions are suffering from the adverse effects of Israeli occupation, policies and aggression.

But we are sure the Golan will be returned to us, in the same way that the other occupied Arab territories will be restored to their owners, despite the ferocious way in which the Israeli authorities are behaving. We would have liked the workers from occupied the Golan and Palestine to be present at the Conference.

There is no doubt that you have all been following the events in the Syrian Arab Republic and the Middle East. Events have taken a serious turn in our country, where the extent of the conspiracy and interference at regional and international levels in our country is becoming clear. In particular, there are operations of incitement against the regime to generate chaos and prevent any efforts of development, reconstruction, employment and education.

All this has negative repercussions on the lives of the young generation who are entering the labour market in the Syrian Arab Republic, a country with a particularly high percentage of young people. The economic sanctions imposed on our country under the so-called Syria Accountability Act, imposed by the United States Congress, has had a great impact on our workers and resulted in the closure of enterprises.

The failure of the conspiracy against our country will ensure that the Syrian Arab Republic will continue on its road to progress and development in all areas. The modernization and reforms being undertaken have the acceptance and blessing of the widest social strata, and may be evidenced in all sectors of social, economic and political life. Furthermore, the participation of the national political forces in Syrian society is increasing, especially with respect to the fight against corruption, under the leadership of His Excellency, President Bashar Al' Assad.

The attempts of the brutal forces of globalization to create wars in the world in order to expose the repercussions of the global economic crisis caused by the recommendation of the IMF, the World Bank and WTO, have failed. This is clear from the demonstrations we see in the streets of Greece, Portugal and Ireland to protest against the austerity programmes that these institutions are seeking to impose in order to plunder their resources and tread the workers underfoot.

We condemn the creation of wars waged in Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya, as well as the economic sanctions against Iran, Korea, Sudan, Cuba, Syria, Venezuela and Belarus, which cause irreparable harm to people – and mostly workers and employers.

The Syrian Workers' group supports the ILO's programmes, especially those to tackle unemployment, eliminate all forms of exploitation, combat the worst forms of child labour, fight against pov-

erty and marginalization and encourage the entry of young people and women into the labour force.

Our Syrian society is characterized by a total lack of exploitation and gender discrimination, and by full equality between working women and men with respect to rights and obligations. It pays special attention to issues of environmental protection, as well as to maternity and child welfare, as evidenced by the documents in international organizations such as UNICEF and UNESCO. At this juncture, we should like to thank the ILO, and particularly the Office in Beirut, for the seminars and workshops it has organized on these subjects.

The Syria is looking forward with great optimism to the future and shall pursue its efforts to improve the living conditions of its people.

We are proud that our country is free of the curse of death which is common in most poor and developing countries and even developed ones. We have no need to be dictated to from outside or be subjected to the diktat of financial monopolies. We have always wanted to be able to rely upon ourselves.

Finally, I hope that the work of this Conference is crowned with success and that the ILO opens up more democratically to world trade union organizations.

Original Portuguese: Mr FEIJO (Representative, World Union of Professions)

The World Union of Professions (WUP) represents professionals around the world and I would like to invite us all to reflect on the theme of the 100th Session of the International Labour Conference, "Building a future with decent work". This is an all-encompassing theme – one that goes back to the historical aspects of work. Initially, work was actually seen by man as a form of punishment. Man had refused to obey God and thus he would be punished and have to earn his daily bread by the sweat of his brow.

This view has changed through time and work has come to be regarded as a means of social insertion and advancement. Through his work, man grows and develops, both socially and culturally. Employment is the bridge between economic growth, the eradication of poverty and human development. Therefore, sustainable poverty reduction will only be possible through economic growth, growth which should occur through decent work. Workers who are in decent jobs generate wealth for their countries. Work which should be properly remunerated in the exercise and conditions of freedom, equality and security, and which can ensure dignified life. Indeed, this is the very definition of decent work.

WUP represents workers who have acquired their background in universities. We bring together many professionals, coming from various fields, all of whom work to defend life, law and the environment, and to promote good relations between communities and nations.

Owing to the fact that we are educated professionals, in our countries, we do not have direct experience of the exploitation of women. In fact, quite often in our professional world, women make up half of the workforce. Neither are we directly affected by child labour because children do not have university degrees and therefore do not form part of the professional workforce.

The WUP and its affiliates, some of which are based in countries where exploitation of women and children does still exist, join the ILO in its fight for decent work, the elimination of all forms of child labour and the full recognition of the role of women in the professional market. As a result of the Euro-Mediterranean event, held in April in Marseilles in France, the WUP launched the Declaration of Marseilles which calls for peace and democracy and appeals to professionals in affiliated organizations to put their services to good use by assisting Mediterranean Arab countries in search of better living conditions, decent work and social justice.

In a world where the negative actions of one community or country have immediate consequences for everyone else, as is the case with incidents which harm the environment, the most important component of nature, man, cannot continue to suffer slavery or forced labour as though he were a mere commodity.

We, as workers with university training, have a duty to help and cooperate in every way that we can to combat slave labour and the exploitation of women and children. We must ensure that these phenomena are eliminated and replaced with decent work, for the good of our children's future. Thus, we, the world's university-trained professional workers, pledge our support for the ILO's efforts to eradicate these scourges.

Mr WALDORFF (Representative, Public Services International)

It is a proud moment to address this 100th Session of the International Labour Conference.

In my speech here a year ago, I stated that investment in quality public services is key to building sustainable, just and equitable societies, and will help us to survive any economic crisis. A year later, I must sadly conclude that many governments did not listen to that message. Instead, you heeded the demands of the International Monetary Fund and the European Union, trusting that cuts and austerity would be the only way forward.

If you believe that this proud institution, namely the ILO, has a role to play in fighting inequalities in the world, then you will agree that the citizens have the right to receive quality public services and that all public sector workers have the right to full collective bargaining.

Public Services International (PSI) represents the women and men who are the muscles, the brains and the heart of public services. Some of them collect the taxes we pay to provide public services equally and fairly to all citizens. A brave example are the members of the Egyptian Independent Real Estate Tax Authorities Union who have risked their lives, and their jobs, over the past several years, leading public demonstrations against corruption, while also standing up for the right to establish an independent union. They inspired many Egyptians – leading up to the popular revolution this year. It was a decisive moment when the independent unions called a general strike and President Mubarak finally stepped down.

We should all pay tribute to progressive PSI affiliates across the Middle East and North Africa, who have been denouncing corruption associated with the privatization of public services and who have been pivotal in effecting regime change. They are leading the way in establishing new democratic societies in their countries. Today, I count on your

commitment to support these moves towards democracy.

The Director-General, in his Report to this Conference, correctly writes that the global scenario is changing rapidly, and this time we will need some structures to hold on to. We need structures that can provide the foundations for stability. Where can we find peace and more equality between men and women in the world today? Only in countries where strong public services provide an equitable redistribution of wealth, protect democracy and deliver security, justice and decent work. Indeed, this should be the global signpost we follow in times of global change. However, such an approach is far from being the reality. The abovementioned public services are under vicious and widespread attack.

Let me just give you a quick ride on the global roller coaster. There have been unprecedented attacks on public sector workers in Wisconsin and other states in the United States, where countless bills have been tabled to strip collective bargaining rights, cut pensions and privatize public services.

Fiji has just declared that public service workers are to be denied the right to equal employment opportunities, the right to freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining.

In Botswana, the public sector workforce is currently on strike after enduring wage freezes for three years, and I could continue with a long list of European countries where austerity measures have been used as an excuse to deny social dialogue, restrict collective bargaining, to dismiss large numbers of public sector workers and freeze or, in many cases, drastically cut the wages of the remaining workers. The reality is that millions of public sector jobs will disappear and, everywhere, an equal number of private sector jobs will also be lost.

These attacks are in clear violation of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, and it should be our mutual concern. The ILO principles of tripartism are under attack. Therefore, the ILO must utterly condemn these coordinated attacks on working people. Do not turn a blind eye to these developments. If people lose sight of the signposts, disorder will replace democracy – and who will take responsibility for such a development?

The third Global Report on equality, entitled “Equality at work: The continuing challenge”, makes it painfully clear that women and young people are suffering the most in these times. It is therefore especially important that this Conference adopts a strong Convention on decent work for domestic workers.

Finally, this is not the time for dividing public and private sector workers. We are developing the power of our global union movement, and we are united, as never before, in order to defend and promote quality public services.

We are thinking globally and acting locally, by connecting local issues to action across borders. We must work together in the people’s interest.

Ms HAGEN (*Representative, International Federation of University Women*)

Thank you for this opportunity to speak on behalf of the International Federation of University Women, an NGO that has long been accredited to the International Labour Conference because of its commitment to the education and advancement of women and girls.

The IFUW has an important function, namely to complement the fundamental tripartism of the ILO with its strong network of national associations of educated women, whose mission is to promote equal opportunities for men and women, for boys and girls, primarily through education for the rights of girls and women, the current international theme of the work of the organization.

We agree with the key message in the 2011 Global Report on *Equality at work: The continuing challenge*, namely that much remains to be done to achieve gender equality in access to jobs, remuneration, benefits, working conditions, wages and access to decision-making positions. With average wages for women continuing, as the Report notes, to be 70 to 90 per cent of those earned by men, there is a call for organizations like the IFUW to promote the rights of girls and women, and the IFUW is dedicated to achieving this, first and foremost, through ensuring access to education.

The IFUW’s longstanding role of highlighting these concerns at the ILO has benefited from the dedicated inspiration and leadership of Conchita Poncini, a woman whose career started at the ILO, but who then moved on to assume a leadership role as the head of the IFUW delegation to the UN in Geneva. She was tireless in her commitment to women’s rights and to reminding us all of the importance of a rights-based approach to equal opportunities, rooted in the right to education. After a long and courageous battle with cancer, Conchita passed away on 13 May 2011. We will miss her, but we hope that her unswerving dedication to gender equality will inspire us all to pay special attention to the ways in which gender influences opportunities for decent work and social justice.

It is timely that the 100th International Labour Conference is addressing many issues where gender is a factor in the changing dynamics of social justice, to inspire us, in Conchita’s memory, to support new and updated policies. Domestic work, social protection and labour administration are all areas where opportunities for girls and women are being recognized as integral to social justice. The IFUW would emphasize these elements in the deliberations of various committees on these issues that take into account the importance of access to education for the rights of girls and women.

In the discussions on domestic work, we encourage attention to provisions for the effective empowerment of domestic workers through literacy, education and training opportunities. We support solutions that protect workers’ health, safety and well-being, while also recognizing that domestic work can serve as an important opportunity for productive employment and economic self-sufficiency.

In terms of social protection, we appreciate a horizontal approach, which involves looking at a new instrument, in the form of a Recommendation, to empower men and women, boys and girls, with a minimum protection floor. In the debate on a vertical approach to improve social benefits incrementally, we support access to education as a key determinant of successful policies.

In the field of labour administration, we endorse the need for the modernization of labour inspectorates, to address discrimination in remuneration and working conditions, and especially the challenges of hidden and unpaid work of girls and women.

Finally, the IFUW has regularly raised concerns about gender bias in the Constitution of the Interna-

tional Labour Organization, and we are pleased to note that a significant review process is now under way to introduce inclusive language for the purpose of promoting gender equality. This is especially pertinent to the principle of gender equality in the composition of delegates to the International Labour Conference, where the specific provision of article 3(2) will benefit from the application of the principle of gender equality, rather than the presumption that it is sufficient merely to “have at least one woman adviser” only in circumstances when “questions specially affecting women are considered by the Conference”.

We certainly recognize that all issues affect men and women equally.

Original Russian: Mr SHCHERBAKOV (Representative, General Confederation of Trade Unions)

One hundred Conferences – it is an appropriate yardstick to measure the viability of any international organization, its relevance to the international community, its longevity, the survival of its traditions. The ILO has always been, and will remain, true to its ideals and, in this era of globalism, continue to be an active initiator, defender and driver of social dialogue.

The contribution of the ILO to the development of civilized labour market relations and social policies is priceless. It is hard to imagine what today’s labour relations would look like if it were not for the ILO, and the rich instruments that were developed through a unique process of tripartite international dialogue.

The unions of our region espouse development and strengthening the tripartite nature of the ILO. We value its ability to effectively respond to new trends in international developments, specifically those that result from globalization. However, we are firmly convinced that the key activity of the ILO should remain the development of international labour standards in the form of Conventions and Recommendations. We are pleased that, after a certain period of decline in standard-setting activities, the ILO has once again returned to this area of activity. Our unions hope that the ILO will consider ways of involving transnational corporations in a system of regulated labour relations, since these corporations – the world’s biggest employers – are de facto outside the field of application of the ILO Conventions today.

We are pleased to note that our assessment of the current situation of the world and the ILO’s role in it are in line with that outlined in the Report of the Director-General of the ILO.

We agree that the worst of the international economic crisis is more or less over. The time has come for all public forces to endeavour together to bring about a recovery of economic growth and employment. But today we need a different model of economic growth. The indicator of effectiveness should not be bare growth statistics but socio-economic outcomes that lead to real improvements in the lives of people. In such a post-crisis period, we cannot allow considerations of economic advantage to outweigh the interests of working people. This is the position of the unions of our countries and, in this, we concur with the conclusions of the Report.

The international community must do everything to make this period of post-crisis reconstruction of the world order the beginning of the new era of so-

cial justice referred to in the Report. The path to this can be found in the implementation of the Decent Work Agenda.

Against this background we must not underestimate the danger of the attacks on the rights of workers and trade unions which we are seeing today in many countries. One of the most influential Russian oligarchs came up with the idea of extending the working week from 40 to 60 hours, which quite rightly elicited the protests of unions. The situation in the labour market in Georgia is alarming; it has one of the most reactionary labour codes against which the Association of Trade Unions of Georgia – one of our affiliated organizations – has been fighting.

Such attempts to turn the clock back can be stopped if employers and authorities are forced to respect international labour standards, not just on paper but in action. This is a difficult task, as we know from our own experience, since our Confederation has over the last five years been monitoring the ratification of and compliance with the most important ILO Conventions in the countries of our region. It seems to us that the implementation of the Report’s idea of creating an ILO tribunal would greatly enhance the efficiency of the ILO supervisory machinery.

In conclusion, I will say that the member organizations of our Confederation value the new ILO initiatives contained in the Report, and we are prepared to make a proper contribution to carrying them out and to future efforts to bring us closer to that ideal of an era of social justice.

Original Spanish: Mr GONZÁLEZ (Employer, Dominican Republic)

The Employers’ delegation of the Dominican Republic extends greetings to all of the delegations attending this 100th Session of the International Labour Conference. This session is of vital importance, given the current global economic and social environment. We also welcome the Report of the Director-General, Mr Juan Somavia, which reaffirms the importance of the ILO as the only international body which focuses on the world of work and tripartism as a way of achieving social agreements which allow for sustainable development in our societies.

Over the last few decades, we have experienced major changes in the economic, social and technological order and this has given rise to issues which have affected all our countries. On the one hand, the opening up of markets and a globalizing trend worldwide have caused us to look for greater levels of productivity and efficiency in companies. At the same time, the situation which countries are faced with forces us to seek new ways of generating greater wealth within a distribution model which is fair, inclusive and sustainable.

This challenge is something which we have tried to meet in the Dominican Republic, given that we have high levels of unemployment and a trend towards an informal economy. Furthermore, our legislation is not adapted to the level of development within our country. The employers of the Dominican Republic support the criteria set out by the International Organisation of Employers concerning the role of companies in society and in the world of work.

We see the ILO as an agile and efficient organization which assists governments, workers and em-

ployers. On the basis of tripartite consensus we must contribute to the reduction of poverty and to promoting corporate social responsibility, education and quality training. In order to achieve these objectives, we need a balanced and efficient ILO.

The process of dialogue and social coordination to which we aspire must be able to respond to the labour issues which affect us. It is important that we bring our legislation and labour standards in line with the new world, as well as ensuring the sustainability of the Dominican social security system. We have to incorporate modern methods into labour provisions. In the Dominican Republic, labour relations with the social partners are harmonious and fluid and we have a climate of social peace which is being strengthened day by day. Nonetheless, the conditions we are faced with do not make it possible for us to meet the aims and aspirations of everybody, for example, we have not managed to combat poverty, reduce informal employment or render our society more inclusive and fairer.

The eradication of poverty through wealth creation is possible if we promote sustainable and competitive companies by training their human resources and adopting new technological advances, in accordance with the international requirements of the market. To achieve this, it is essential to have a company culture which is based on innovation, development, economic growth and social commitment.

The implementation of these actions will have a positive impact on economies such as ours, where the informal sector absorbs more than half of the jobs generated in the country thus preventing the implementation of standards relating to decent work.

Therefore, we have made a commitment here, today, to promote social dialogue in the labour sector of the Dominican Republic and, at the same time, to provide sources of decent and quality work by improving national education and health services as well as consolidating the investment environment, safeguarding legal security and ensuring that all workers enjoy equal opportunities and conditions.

Finally, we should remember that long-lasting peace is only possible when the people's welfare is improved in a fair manner. This welfare is linked to the real implementation of public and private policies which foster transparency and the creation of decent and sustainable jobs in responsible companies. For this reason, we reaffirm that the tripartism which is promoted and advocated by the ILO, requires and depends on the consolidation of the employment sector in its role as an indispensable source of wealth and stability for all countries.

Original Spanish: Mr SIGLIANO (Representative, Organización de Entidades Mutuales de las Américas)

This presentation to the ILO by ODEMA is the first in the history of mutual organizations, which are part of a movement which gave birth to trade unionism and form a system with the capacity to join forces and combat inequality and social exclusion.

Through solidarity, they improve the quality of life in the communities in which they are active and create the conditions for eradicating poverty, promoting equality of opportunities and social inclusion. Working in such a way, they can complement the efforts of States to strengthen and create the social floor for which we all work, in keeping with the

2008 Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization.

The Organization of Mutual Bodies of the Americas (ODEMA) of which I am the President is a non-profit making regional organization representing mutualist entities in 15 countries of the region.

ODEMA organizes South-South collaborative activities, working with other regions such as Africa, on the basis of written agreements between ODEMA and the African Mutual Union.

ECLAC has mentioned that inequality was one of the reasons for the lack of social cohesion on the American continent. Here, the social sector can do a great deal to achieve sustainable and more equitable development. Mutualism has a mission to promote human development without discrimination, with no prior conditions, as a system that is efficient and sustainable and based on solidarity, and able to bring about social development.

In 2004, ODEMA was able to put these principles and actions into action at the international and regional levels. It came forward with proposals for changes to legislation in a number of different countries. It set up decentralized information offices and also signed regional mutual assistance agreements. Important achievements included affiliating to the ISSA, its recognition as an integrated development network in the OAS, and a written agreement with PAHO and WHO. We also adhered to the Inter-American Conference of Social Security, through an agreement on training and publicity.

On 16 May this year, the Government Committee of the Economic and Social Council recommended accreditation for ODEMA to the ECOSOC system as an advisory body, recognizing its excellent work in this area.

One of the main areas of our activity is training managers and employees for work in mutual institutions. We share an ethical background aimed at trying to change society, improving the situation and to develop mutualist services.

As part of this, the members of ODEMA have a lot to offer. They have been active, for example, in the area of comprehensive healthcare, based on the model "from all, for all and by all", and especially with a view to prevention and primary care based on the WHO approach.

We have been active in promoting social and cultural activities, access to tourism, sport and recreation, and access for people to improve their independence and to help them as they get older.

ODEMA shares the ILO's priorities and is willing to support them through its continued promotion of the mutualist system as the perfect partner in action to improve the quality of life of people.

ODEMA advocates training and education to create future generations who will be more free, just, responsible and cohesive, as they work with others in society to improve social cohesion and social justice.

ODEMA hopes that the Conference will be very constructive for all its participants as we work towards a future with decent work and social security for all.

Original Spanish: Mr PARRA GAONA (Worker, Paraguay)

The 100th Session of the International Labour Conference is an invitation to take time to reflect. We find ourselves at a crossroads and we need to understand that things cannot continue as they were in the past. Everything has to change, and we need

to assume our responsibilities, as governments, employers and workers. We have to understand that it is possible to build a new and different world.

I come from a small country but one with a long history of struggle, Paraguay, which is currently celebrating its bicentenary of independence. I come from a very important political region, Latin America and the Caribbean, which lived through 300 years of harsh colonialism. The slogan at that time was "Independence or death". Faced with the current world in which we live, I think that we should change that slogan to "Change, transformation or death".

As a worker in the metal sector, I represent the National Workers' Congress (CNT), which is a member of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA) and the other trade union confederations in my country. We were very pleased to hear the words of the Director-General of the ILO, Mr Juan Somavia, who comes from Latin America. He explained that we are in the midst of a major crisis and he pointed out that we are still faced with the impoverishment of populations throughout the world. He called on us to initiate an era of social justice for the whole world.

We support this call and, for this reason, I would like to entitle my speech "*For a new era of freedom and social justice*" so that we can move towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals which were set up by the UN and the ILO, the first milestone for which is in 2015. It is necessary to re-think our world in crisis.

Given that this is the 100th Session of the Conference of the ILO, which was founded in 1919, it is not right that we still have to call for freedom of association, an eight-hour working day, collective bargaining agreements, a just wage, the elimination of the exploitation of workers and children and an end to discrimination against women and to social exclusion, particularly in the case of retired people, indigenous peoples and rural dwellers.

Our Paraguayan wetlands are still blighted by injustice and violations perpetrated out by the enterprise Victoria S.A., owned by the Moon cult, against the population of Puerto Casado. The displacement of indigenous populations is deplorable. Social injustice and restrictions to real freedom are very much present in the twenty-first century.

In Paraguay, the majority of companies and governmental sectors do not respect the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98). Nonetheless, we recognize that important changes are happening at the level of public policy. But we have had a very painful experience, in that seven out of every ten trade unions which are set up fail because the leaders of those trade unions are made redundant and nothing, it would seem, can be done to modify that situation. It is money that counts.

Given this situation, in Paraguay we are calling for the establishment of a Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security. Our indigenous workers are in a deplorable situation. The peasants are being displaced from their lands by soya and rice farmers and livestock farmers. The salaries that they earn do not cover the needs of their families, and 2 per cent of landowners control 80 per cent of the arable land.

Nonetheless, we should point out that, in 2010 we had incredible economic growth, which would have been inconceivable in other times – 14.5 per cent. The wealth that was accumulated is in very few hands and controlled by a small number of companies. Furthermore, those who became powerful under the dictatorship of General Stroessner and his followers remain so. Young people and children suffer from exclusion and a lack of opportunities. The superficial democracy has failed, and we are faced with enormous change in this time of crisis.

I would like to propose the following changes: that we finish with war and rearmament; do away with the major differences in development in our countries; combat social inequality between men and women; end discrimination and poverty; do away with forced labour because it is not good; and we need to eliminate the exploitation of children. We need to be tireless defenders of human rights, knowing that workers' rights are an essential part of human rights.

We should be able to change the world in order to ensure that our children and other generations are provided with a planet and have a political, economic and cultural situation that is compatible with human dignity and with our right to set up democratic societies with popular participation, freedom and social justice.

We accept the call of our Director-General, and I have sent out a greeting to all of those people who want to achieve a world with justice, as supported by the ILO.

Mr ROLEK (*Employer, Hungary*)

I would like to congratulate the ILO for its centennial International Labour Conference and for the continuous efforts it has made throughout its history for tripartism in the world of work, and to join in the celebration of this historic moment.

The ILO has constantly been devoted to advancing opportunities for men and women to obtain decent and productive work under conditions of freedom, equality, security and human dignity. The main aims have been to promote rights at work, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection and strengthen dialogue in handling work-related issues.

In promoting social justice and internationally recognized human and labour rights, the Organization continues to pursue its founding mission: that labour peace is essential to prosperity.

Today, we live in a globalized world. In this framework, the ILO helps to advance the creation of decent jobs and the kinds of economic and working conditions that give the business community and all working people prosperity and progress.

Work is essential to people's well-being. In addition to providing income, work can pave the way for broader social and economic advancement, strengthening individuals, their families and communities. This situation requires effective and affordable policy actions by all constituents to ensure productive and rewarding jobs for all groups. Labour market flexibility, quality education and the encouragement of entrepreneurship will enhance employability and productivity and also transition us into a new and innovative world economy.

Ambitious national flexicurity strategies are necessary and important today to achieve job creation, including a better-qualified, flexible and affordable

workforce, with better functioning of the labour markets.

Various forms of atypical employment, appropriate forms of telework and the applicable flexible regulations, all contribute significantly to job creation. A flexible approach is important for businesses. The need for atypical forms of employment is on the rise, while the relevant legislative regulations are still not adequately available in certain cases, as some governments and unions stubbornly stick to outdated paradigms of the twentieth century.

Social partners must be able to find practical and achievable solutions for societies, companies and workers alike, also taking into account and accepting the rapidly changing global economic environment. These days, it is even more important in Europe as it struggles to keep pace with other continents. Implementing reforms is not a liberal agenda aiming to attack social rights, but it is the direct consequence of the world we live in – a world of many opportunities, but also challenges.

Sustainable job creation should be supported by the social partners, thus playing an essential role in forming practical solutions for economic recovery within the framework of social dialogue. Social partners play a particular role in the area of employment and social policy, due to their involvement and the interests they represent in the labour market. Therefore, tripartite dialogue should be a dominant instrument for the open method of consultation and coordination for employment and social policy.

These fundamentals, next to legislation, are necessary all around the world, including in my country, Hungary. The Hungarian Government's plan to establish a broader social consultation framework must not weaken or abolish the proven tripartite and bipartite consultation processes and institutions. Social partners must keep their exclusive rights to be consulted on labour and employment related topics.

In conclusion, the Hungarian employers are convinced that the ILO has fulfilled an important and complementary role with respect to the world of work in the past hundred years, with the values and basic principles on which this Organization was initiated and built. I wish us all similar success in the future. This will require our continued involvement to meet the ever-changing world we live in.

Ms IP (Representative, International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF))

The IUF provides an organizational base for the International Domestic Workers' Network (IDWN), and I am the Asian Regional Coordinator for that network.

In today's world, vast numbers of women are migrating. They leave their own children and elders behind, in the care of others. They do it precisely because of their love for their families, so that the money they earn can pay for education, healthcare, and so on. Off they go, most of them to work as domestic workers, caring for others.

I ask whether the world has ever seen anything like it, such a deliberate movement of so many women, as a strategy for themselves and their families, promoted by many governments, to help relieve poverty. If they were not poor, surely far fewer numbers would do it. This is why we need a

far better economic system for the world, as the Director-General so rightly states in his Report, this year.

I come from Hong Kong with a population of 7 million. In Hong Kong alone, there are nearly 290,000 migrant domestic workers, from the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Nepal, India and Sri Lanka.

In Hong Kong, some employment law recognizes domestic workers as workers. The Employment Ordinance (Cap. 57) clearly states that it applies to domestic workers, and further makes the "maintenance of the household" equivalent to a "business". This implies that domestic workers should enjoy the same conditions as other kinds of workers. So, under the law, domestic workers in Hong Kong have the right to rest days, rights to claim for unpaid or underpaid wages, the right to join unions, and so on.

However, the Hong Kong Government is not consistent in its policy. There are other labour ordinances – the Mandatory Provident Fund Scheme Ordinance and the newly implemented Minimum Wage Ordinance, which explicitly exclude domestic workers. Domestic workers are denied the rights to enjoy retirement protection and a statutory minimum wage.

Worse, the immigration rules often restrict migrant domestic workers from enjoying the labour rights they should enjoy. The new Condition of Stay, or two-week rule, requires migrant domestic workers to leave Hong Kong within two weeks when their employment contract is terminated. Many domestic workers are, as a result, forced to tolerate abusive employers or agencies, as it is very difficult for them to find a new employer within such a short period of just two weeks. The same rule does not apply to other migrant workers who are professionals. This is discrimination. The United Nations Committee on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights have already condemned the two-week rule as discrimination.

Poor work permit systems also lead to abuse. Where a migrant domestic worker has a permit that says she can only work for that employer, or indeed that particular diplomatic mission, in her host country, this keeps her in a situation of dependency. She dare not leave that employer, no matter if someone in the household is being abusive, because, if she does, she is rendered illegal because she is not allowed to work anywhere else.

So, when governments turn their attention to ratifying the new Convention on domestic workers, we will need them not only to put what it contains into their employment laws but also into their immigration laws and work permit systems.

Governments of origin and destination countries need to collaborate better to ensure there will be no abuses in the job referral processes.

The elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation, as one of the fundamental principles and rights at work, should be realized, not only in labour laws, but also in other policies. The member States have obligations to remove all obstacles, including restrictive immigration policies, to ensure migrant domestic workers are not discriminated against.

The rights of all workers to freedom of association and expression are the foremost basic conditions towards the elimination of discrimination.

They are especially crucial for people, like migrant domestic workers, who are poor, marginalized, and deprived of fair living conditions.

Migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong are organized into the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions (HKCTU). There they can raise their voices and fight to gain political rights. The HKCTU has committed itself to fully support all workers – local and migrants – to build a strong organization to achieve equal rights and decent work for all workers in the territory.

However, I can see that many workers across the world, including in mainland China, are still deprived of these basic trade union and human rights. We will continue to work so that domestic workers, including migrant domestic workers everywhere, enjoy these rights in reality, as set out in the new ILO Convention on decent work for domestic workers that will hopefully be adopted in just a few days' time.

Ms PRYCE (*Worker, Jamaica*)

I am a former domestic worker, and there cannot be many of us who have spoken from this podium. I feel very proud.

I am speaking here on behalf of the Workers' delegation of Jamaica. I am the President of the Jamaica Household Workers' Association and, on behalf of my members, I wish to thank the Government of Jamaica for enabling us to be here.

Our hearts are filled that we have reached such an historic moment. We, the domestic workers of the world, have before us the text of the new ILO Convention that recognizes us as workers with the fundamental rights of other workers. We have been overlooked for so long and now know that what is wrong will at last be set right.

We thank all those who have spoken for us positively, from the Workers, the Governments and from the Employers. The decisions on the Convention have been reached through consensus, which is remarkable.

Yes, there are employers who realize that treating us well, as employees and as fellow human beings in their homes, enhances the well-being and security of themselves, their families, and their property. Sadly, most employers of domestic workers across the world do not see it like this. But with this Convention the voice of the employers who do will also be strengthened. We appeal to them to speak up more, to help change the negative mindset of others.

Across the world, domestic workers are the backbone of society. Our work supports millions of other men and women to go out and contribute to the economy, and children to get an education to support the future development of their country.

But our work is given low status, and no economic value is attached to it. We are poorly paid and in most countries, including Jamaica, our access to social security is limited. Only some employers seem willing to contribute to a national insurance scheme and, sadly, many domestic workers do not register even where they have the right to, often because they cannot get away from work to do so.

We may also have rights in theory to sick leave and vacation leave, but not enjoy these in reality either. If we are sick or need to take time off to attend to our own family business, some employers refuse to pay. Losing even a day or two of pay like this may mean not being able to afford both food and rent for the month. Certainly in Jamaica – and I

am sure in many countries – many household workers are not able to meet even the basic needs of themselves and their families. And the current economic crisis has made our situation even worse.

But often domestic workers are not specifically included in poverty reduction programmes. Surely, improving our wages and access to social protection too would be a key way to reduce poverty in any country, even in Jamaica. And this will help us to fulfil the Millennium Development Goals.

I am very optimistic that in a few days' time we will have the Convention for which we have been fighting. We will begin a new era of mobilizing in each country to get the Convention ratified, and put into practice. We in Jamaica will certainly be taking this up with vigour, as will domestic workers' organizations across the world. We will need all the support we can get for this, including hopefully, technical assistance from the ILO.

We give heartfelt thanks to all those who have provided us with support so far: from those in civil society – the trade unions, migrant workers' networks, women's groups, religious organizations, funders who help strengthen our organizations, academics who have done research, media experts, and so on; then there are the politicians and the civil servants at national or local level who work with us in a positive way; and the employers who have a similar, constructive attitude.

The domestic workers also want to thank the staff of the ILO, especially in ACTRAV, who have given so much professional help. Above all, we say thank you to the Workers Vice-Chairperson of the Tripartite Committee on Domestic Workers, Ms Halimah Yacob. She is an inspiration to women the world over to enter into the political arena to support and promote social justice.

Original Spanish: Mr MAILHOS (Employer, Uruguay)

I wish to comment on the Report of the Director-General, *A new era for social justice*. It calls on us to reflect in depth, mainly because much of its content does not reflect consensus, and that is a troubling situation in itself.

Indeed, the Report contains some definitions which are highly politically charged and which we doubt lie within the remit of the International Labour Organization.

Worse still is the Report's intention to generalize, at a point in time when we are trying to find solutions in individual countries in this globalized world. In the Report, the Director-General identifies the following measures as fundamental political solutions: the reduction of labour market flexibility; increased social spending and an increased role for the ILO in trade agreements; an increase in trade standards, and the list goes on. A series of ideas which certainly will not be accepted by all in the world.

The employers of Uruguay would like to clarify a few things concerning the Report. First of all, we would like to remind you that the governments of all countries are elected, elected with a mandate and it is not up to the ILO to call into question the right of governments to govern. Secondly, in order to carry out its work, the ILO should be truly tripartite. It will not be a success if its Secretariat does not fully take into account the views of all three parties. Thirdly, the ILO should be a neutral body when it comes to politics. It should work based on facts, it should not focus on a unilateral understanding.

Fourthly, we think that the ILO should be a true knowledge-based organization, one that does not advance its own political views when it comes to trends in the labour market. It should try and improve understanding but perhaps be less judgemental.

Although there are still countries and regions where there is a lack of freedom and of basic labour rights, it is generally accepted that the free market economic model is one that is shared by both workers and employers. Economic and social stability is fragile. The problem of course is employment, particularly when it comes to young people. Often this has been put down to a lack of training and education. They are thus not in a position to help their economies to move into the next era, and that I think is clear to all. So the role that we really have to play at the ILO – this is the only international body with a remit in the area of labour – is enormous.

We call upon enterprises and workers to adapt to the rapid changes in global labour markets and to overcome what are often national shortcomings. We have to become a true leader in these areas of policy in the world of labour.

In the past, institutions of the United Nations did respect the work of the ILO. The World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and others have started to move into the field of labour standards, which could lead to conflicts of interest with the ILO. The employers of Uruguay believe that the ILO should promote the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, establish modern and effective labour standards, design programmes and policies that focus on job creation and security and promote policies that favour the creation of sustainable and competitive enterprises.

By way of conclusion, I would just like to make a final comment, which is more specific to Uruguay. Now, as we mentioned, we are not in favour of a unilateral approach. In Uruguay, there is a dispute based on the Collective Bargaining Act. Tomorrow there will be the meeting of the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards and we will be expressing our views there. We hope that this will be a forum that will allow us, with the support of the ILO, to improve laws based upon consensus which lend full social legitimacy to any amendments made.

(The Conference adjourned at 8 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Page

Fifth sitting

First report of the Selection Committee: Submission, discussion and approval	1
Resolution concerning gender equality and the use of language in legal texts of the ILO: Adoption.....	2
Draft proposed editor's note.....	2
Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General: Discussion (<i>cont.</i>).....	2

Sixth sitting

Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General: Discussion (<i>cont.</i>).....	23
---	----

Seventh sitting

Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General: Discussion (<i>cont.</i>).....	27
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