



SIXTEENTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**Report of the Working Party on the
Social Dimensions of the Liberalization
of International Trade**

**Oral report by the Chairperson
of the Working Party**

1. As you are all aware, Ambassador Lyne, who previously chaired the Working Party with great distinction and expertise, has taken up different duties. The Officers of the Governing Body considered that, in the circumstances, the Working Party should at this stage be chaired by the Chairperson of the Governing Body. In that capacity I hence have the honour to report to you on the two sittings held by the Working Party on Monday, which, I would stress, took place in an excellent atmosphere.
2. The Working Party had two documents before it, one on its future activities,¹ the other on recent developments in other organizations.² For reasons that I will discuss later, the Working Party ultimately devoted all its discussions to the first item. In the interests of clarity, I will endeavour to group the statements made around the main section headings of the Office paper, which all agreed was substantive if brief.
3. In general, all the statements welcomed what Lord Brett referred to as a “rebirth” of the Working Party, which had acquired a personality of its own by succeeding in overcoming the profound divisions that had marked its initial work, and had achieved a genuine climate of confidence. The Employers’ spokesperson, Mr. Tabani, called this a second phase of the Working Party and emphasized the need to strengthen its credibility still further, so that it was now acknowledged by all organizations as the international forum in which the social dimensions of the liberalization of international trade and globalization could be discussed without any inhibitions, whereas governments sometimes had a tendency to try to raise these issues in other forums or even to set up new bodies for this purpose outside the ILO.

¹ GB.277/WP/SDL/1.

² GB.277/WP/SDL/2 and Add.1.

4. The theme of making the most of the advantages offered by the Working Party in order to promote an integrated approach between the ILO and the international community in dealing with the interaction of economic and social issues within the globalization process was supported by a significant number of speakers. Similarly, various delegates stressed that the ILO should take the lead based on its comparative advantages, particularly its knowledge base and its unique tripartite structure, when engaging in the examination of the socio-economic aspects of the globalization process. The Working Party, therefore, was particularly well-placed to develop knowledge, to prepare and discuss policy positions, and to work on consensus building, while promoting understanding between the tripartite ILO and other international organizations. In reply to the reference to the possible role of ECOSOC in promoting this integrated approach, it was stressed that ECOSOC was not a tripartite body and could not therefore draw on the expertise of the social partners.
5. Another important point raised by the Working Party was the need to further publicize and make available for consultation the work carried out in order to catch the attention of the international community. Some delegates favoured the idea of establishing a permanent website, as suggested in the Office paper, as a means of facilitating information sharing, even if further information was requested regarding the implications of setting up such a website.
6. Regarding collaboration with the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Worker Vice-Chairperson supported this idea, which should be encouraged along the lines already put forward in the Singapore Declaration. The Working Party's appropriateness as a forum for discussion on the links between trade and core labour standards within a globalized economy was emphasized, even if a degree of opposition on this issue was expressed. Regarding collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions, some delegates highlighted the encouraging change of attitude and policy developments undergone by those organizations since the establishment of the Working Party. The move for strengthened collaboration was echoed by many speakers. The possibility of asking other international organizations, including the WTO and the Bretton Woods institutions, how they view the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, was also put forward. Finally, support was given to strengthening collaboration with UNCTAD and examining how the Bangkok Declaration and Plan of Action could be better included in the integrated approach.
7. Responding to my invitation, the representatives of three international organizations, namely the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Trade Organization and the World Bank made statements following those on the first agenda item. They all supported the development of an integrated approach to economic and social policies and expressed their willingness to collaborate with the ILO in that regard. The Working Party had an important role to play in understanding and debating the social dimensions of globalization, and all three institutions were evolving in a way that was favourable to developing a strengthened partnership with the ILO. Appreciation was expressed for these statements, which were a premiere. A summary of the three statements is appended.
8. The Director-General's decision to develop the Office's internal institutional capacity to assume its responsibilities vis-à-vis other organizations by establishing an *International Policy Group* (IPG) and a study unit within the Group, as well as an *Advisory Committee on International Policy Issues* (ACIP) was welcomed by most speakers. Some asked, however, for further information and clarification about the role of the IPG, its mandate, its resources, its relationship with the Working Party and with external players, and also about the objectives and activities of the ACIP and the study unit established within the IPG. The importance was stressed of the Group's taking into account concerns and issues from a neutral position. Many speakers pointed to the need to strengthen the Office's capacity to

better understand the social impact of globalization, and for some of them, to strengthen the capacity of the ILO to enter into a dialogue on these issues with other international organizations. Finally, various speakers stressed the need to provide sufficient allocations and resources to strengthen this analytical capacity.

9. As regards the *future programme of work and research* discussed in the second part of the Office paper, opinions largely converged on the advisability of extending the range of problems discussed to go beyond the liberalization of trade. The general line of the Office paper was to turn the Working Party into an institutional device to develop a more integrated conception of economic and social development while endeavouring to put an end to any dichotomy of approach that would ultimately be counter-productive, both economically and socially, and this view received broad support. However, a number of speakers, including the IMEC group, stressed that the emphasis thus placed on the need for an integrated approach should not have the result of dodging the issue that lay at the heart of the Working Party's mandate, namely, the problem of the equitable sharing of the possible benefits resulting from the liberalization of trade. Many referred in this connection to the conclusions in the synthesis report on the country studies discussed in November 1999. To me personally it seems that this concern should receive an answer in the proposal made – to which I will return – to continue the country studies, possibly in a revised format. A number of statements on this stressed more specifically that the question of the link between standards and international commerce should not be overlooked, even if there is no question whatsoever of any return to a protectionist view of that link, which has been definitively rejected by the Working Party. The Employers' spokesperson, however, cautioned against any oversimplistic view of the subject, stressing that it was difficult to limit the studies on the economic impact of standards to the fundamental standards alone.
10. Several comments were made on the list of subjects for research or other activities to promote an integrated approach set out in paragraph 19 of the Office paper. A number of statements expressed concern that certain subjects in the list should not overlap with the competence of other committees (for example, the proposed study on the changing role of pension funds in the global economy and its implications). Allow me to mention in passing that there is some misunderstanding in this respect, since the list was only intended to set out current or planned research with a view to an integrated approach, without in any way prejudging the question of the committee under whose competence they might fall. Several speakers also felt that the proposals should in addition take into account those in paragraph 101 of the synthesis report of last November. The observation in the Office paper that the comments should be taken into account for the purposes of strategic programming was supported by several speakers, as was the idea of involving the Working Party in the preparation of relevant future programme proposals.
11. A number of specific comments were made on the themes proposed in paragraph 19, and in particular the last one, concerning private sector initiatives, on which the Employers' spokesperson expressed reservations. Various speakers suggested adding other themes to the list. One government stressed the need to cover the issue of knowledge workers, which was at the heart of the dichotomy in the global economy. A reference was also made to the imbalance between the labour market, which remained closed, and the capital market, which is becoming global – with all the distortions and social problems that this could generate.
12. Finally, as regards the section on strengthening the Organization's institutional means of action, the approach based on the Declaration of Philadelphia set out in the Office paper was well supported. The list of subjects in paragraph 25 which might be the subject of thematic debate with the Bretton Woods institutions received support from many speakers. The IMEC group lent its support to the three subjects proposed (social security reform, job

creation to combat poverty, and the role of freedom of association in the development of social capital), which should be the subject of an initial discussion in the Working Party before being referred if necessary to a specialized committee. After hearing statements by the Bretton Woods institutions, the Workers' spokesperson suggested adding to this subject the topics of foreign direct investment and its relation to the objective of decent work for all, as well as the link between regulation of international financial markets and social stability. While supporting the themes, one government stressed that it was necessary to approach them in the context set out in paragraph 101 of the synthesis report of last November.

- 13.** The proposal in paragraph 26 of the Office paper was also supported to pursue the country studies in a "lighter" form following the synthesis report of last November. This should answer the remarks by some speakers made during the discussion that the number of countries covered by the country studies was too small as a basis for general conclusions on how the benefits of the liberalization of trade were shared between different countries and between different categories within countries.
- 14.** At the close of the discussion the Working Party benefited from a detailed and very substantive reply by the Director-General. The importance of his statement seems to me to justify making his reply available in written form to all members of the Governing Body. I will therefore refrain from summarizing it.
- 15.** In view of the discussions and the Director-General's reply, it was thought that there was no point in entering into any separate discussion on recent developments in other organizations, which were the subject of a separate document prepared by the Office which was very rich and interesting. The information in it was nevertheless very useful for the discussion on the first agenda item. It was thought that the discussion in the Working Party had focused on the outlook for the future and that there would be little value in any retrospective debate on events that were now behind us and had been the source of divisions between Members. The Workers' spokesperson noted that, in view of the very positive contribution that the representatives of the Bretton Woods institutions and the WTO had made to the discussion in the Working Party, at least initially, issues of general policy involving them could be addressed in the Working Party. He also stressed that the Working Party had now confirmed that it had acquired the necessary experience to discuss, calmly and efficiently, issues that were highly contentious, and that while there could be no question of preventing anyone from raising such issues in other international forums, the Working Party's experience would strengthen its authority as perceived from outside.
- 16.** The question of whether the oral report of the Chairperson should be supplemented by a written report was also raised at the close of the discussion. As the Office recalled, the practice derived from time constraints and from the need to avoid inhibiting the freedom of expression that characterized the Working Party by issuing the same kind of detailed report as those produced by the committees. I think it important to make this oral report available to all members of the Governing Body and to those outside as soon as possible in printed form and on the Internet. As an experiment, I have asked that the text of my statement be distributed in the three languages, with an appendix containing summaries of the statements made by the organizations whose representatives spoke as well as the statement by the Director-General. Perhaps we can examine at some later date whether the discussion of the Working Party should be reproduced in the minutes of the Governing Body.
- 17.** Finally, in the light of the discussion held in November 1999 and the many statements that all tended in the same direction, it was decided that the title of the Working Party should be modified to better reflect the real direction in which its mandate had evolved. Agreement was reached on the title "Working Party on the Social Dimension of

Globalization". However, it should be clearly understood that this concept covers, inter alia, the liberalization of trade, which was the original purpose of the Working Party's establishment.

- 18.** In closing, I should like to warmly thank the Vice-Chairpersons of the Working Party, Lord Brett and Mr. Tabani, for the support and cooperation that they have shown me, as well as all the members of the Working Party who contributed to a very rich debate while consolidating the climate of mutual understanding and harmony that is the hallmark of this Working Party.

Geneva, 30 March 2000.

Appendix I

Statements by the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization and the World Bank

Summary

1. The representative of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) recalled that frequent reference had been made during the debate to collaboration between the ILO and the Bretton Woods institutions, and mentioned as an example the final report on the country studies on the social impact of globalization. That document, which had been reviewed by a wide range of IMF staff, provided a balanced discussion of some of the most contentious issues surrounding globalization. He stressed the IMF's increased emphasis on the need for a social pillar in the reform of the international financial architecture and also the replacement of the *Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility* by the *Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility*, and recognized the need to consolidate an integrated approach to economic and social policy. This called for stronger collaboration with other international organizations, including the ILO.
2. Recalling that raising average income was the best way to improve living conditions for all members of society, he supported the view in the Office report that to mitigate the possible negative social impact of globalization, there was a need to strengthen public social policy, including education, training, laws and workers' fundamental rights. It was also important, however, to improve the efficiency of social spending. There was no overwhelming evidence that growing income inequality was caused by trade liberalization, and he recalled the negative impact that trade protectionism had had on economic growth among the poorest in society. It was necessary to distinguish between the social impact of globalization in the short and in the long term, and that country ownership was the key to the success of poverty reduction.
3. The representative of the World Trade Organization (WTO) stressed that most member States of the WTO were also members of the ILO, and recalled that those countries had signed the Singapore Declaration in 1996, committing themselves to core labour standards, supporting the ILO, affirming that trade helps promote higher labour standards, opposing the use of labour standards for protectionist purposes and agreeing that the comparative advantage of countries should in no way be put into question. He also referred to the adoption by the ILO of the 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and to the agreement to prohibit the worst forms of child labour. Mentioning the Singapore mandate, he said that the WTO and the ILO secretariats must have a good working relationship and that there was no difference between the two organizations on the vital importance of advancing labour standards and the need to do so by persuasion and positive assistance.
4. He recognized that the benefits of the global economy were not evenly shared, but pointed out that the vulnerable would not be helped by blocking trade and making economies poorer. He also stressed that poverty, not trade, was the main cause of unacceptable working conditions and environmental degradation, and that as living standards improved, so would education, health, the environment and labour standards. Finally, in reply to the question raised during the discussion concerning ILO observer status in the WTO, he stressed that if the ILO applied to be observer, this would have to be put to the WTO General Council, which took decisions on a consensus basis.
5. The representative of the World Bank congratulated the Office on the background documents both for the present session and last November's session. He said the World Bank believed in liberalization within the overall framework of development, stressing that what was changing for his organization was the recognition of the social dimensions of the globalization process. There undoubtedly had been an increase in risk and vulnerability, in some cases in inequality as well. These trends could not be ignored and called for responses from international organizations, national governments, the social partners and other actors.

6. He then mentioned the kinds of responses that the World Bank was making and referred to the *Comprehensive Development Framework* and to the Bank's work on social principles. Stressing the increasing importance of the World Bank's partnership with the ILO, he referred to the recent mission to Washington of an ILO delegation headed by the Director-General himself, and stated that the two organizations were continuing collaboration in areas such as child labour and vocational training and expanding their collaboration to new areas. The documents submitted to the present meeting were reviewed with interest in the World Bank, and the Working Party was an important forum for considering contentious issues concerning trade and labour, even if there was a need to consider the broader process of globalization, including its implications for the informal sectors and the technological dimensions of change. The discussions had to consider the position of the poorest and he offered the World Bank's support to the list of possible activities put forward in the two documents submitted in November 1999 and at the present session.

Appendix II

Statement by the Director-General to the Working Party on the Social Dimensions of the Liberalization of International Trade, 27 March 2000

Thank you Mr. Chairman and thank you to all of you who have intervened in this debate which I also find, as so many of you have said, extremely useful and practical and which gives guidance to the work that we have to do in the Office.

In November, you asked us for a document that would help to define the next stage. We chose to prepare a document that opens up potentials and avenues, rather than saying these are the one, two, three things that we have to do.

The first thing that for me comes out clearly, is that this Working Party has an identity, and this does not happen often in working parties of the multilateral system. Firstly, it is a place where we can develop studies and develop knowledge. There were two clear references to that – the country studies on globalization and the studies on the Asian crisis, two documents which produced information and knowledge and were perceived to be useful.

Secondly, it is prepared to take up hard issues. Because it is a working party, because it has a certain level of informality, it is more amenable to discussing hard questions. For example, the debates that took place here were part of the process by which the Declaration was finally approved. So, the second element that I would highlight is that it is not only a good place to develop knowledge, but it is also a good place to promote policy-making.

The third element is that these two things would not have been possible if the Working Party had not been a place of dialogue and consensus building. There are other places in the ILO in which problems are presented more starkly, but here you have decided that you want a place of dialogue and consensus building. This is a third dimension of the identity of the Working Party that we have to make sure that we maintain.

If you put all these things together – knowledge, policy-making and consensus building – this is what produces credibility. You are rightly proud of the work that has been done in this Working Party because you have established credibility. What we need to do now is to build on these very solid foundations so that we can deal well with the challenges ahead.

This is what we have tried to synthesize in paragraph 22 of the paper. Let me read out that paragraph:

The objective of the exercise will be to deepen the ILO's knowledge base with respect to the interaction between different dimensions of economic and social policies within the new framework of a global economy. This would serve as a basis for policy proposals that could enhance the capability of countries to better cope with the social impact of globalization. The results will contribute to dialogue and exchange with other international organizations on issues of common interest.

The last point may be something that we have to add to the Working Party. We are happy that we have the three representatives of the World Bank, the IMF and the WTO here. We should develop this interaction.

I think that in order to meet these objectives we have to start from some fundamentals. I have sometimes said that we hear a lot about market fundamentals. Here in the ILO we have to think more about people's fundamentals, to take into account how it is that global policies affect the lives of people, while maintaining certain basic policy concepts that we all agree to. The ILO is for open economies and for open societies. Our problem is that the way open economies and open societies

are working in the globalization process, they are not benefiting enough people. So we have an agreement on the foundations, but a preoccupation with the results.

Secondly, we would like to see markets work for everybody. That would be our aspiration. But the market creates winners and losers, so how do we minimize the number of losers and maximize the number of winners?

The third point is that globalization is a reality. It is here to stay, but some aspects of globalization are irreversible, while others can be changed. The irreversible part of globalization is the revolution in information and communication technologies. That is a major societal change which is going to affect all of our work in government, in business and in society.

But there are other aspects of globalization that are not inevitable. These are the policies that have accompanied globalization, macroeconomic policies, financial policies, trade policies or social policies. These are made by policy-makers and they can be fine-tuned, adjusted, even changed by policy-makers. What policy changes are required to give the right governance to globalization?

This is what we are looking at, from the perspective of the ILO. How have we decoded that in terms of ILO work? We have called it decent work in a global economy. The global economy, of course, includes monetary, financial, trade, social development, technology policies, interacting in totally different and new ways. And the world of work includes employment creation, workers' rights, social protection, social dialogue and the rest of the agenda of the ILO. I think there are very few people in the world who would dare to stand up and say: "well, let me explain to you how the global economy works". Because in fact the changes are so rapid and so fluid and the interaction is so new that it is creating new phenomena. And unless we understand these new phenomena, we may be committing policy mistakes because these will be rooted in old knowledge that does not respond to the new realities.

Why am I taking time to explain the analytical dimension of what we are doing? Because I think that it is essential to have a common framework on which we agree. This is what is behind this rather synthetic language we have put in paragraph 22, which is developed at length in my "Decent work" report.

Some of you have said that we should not lose the trade dimension. When you analyse the impact of the global economy on the world of work, there is going to be a space in which you look at the relationship between trade and conditions at work. But the world of work is more than labour standards, and globalization is more than trade liberalization. You need to put each one of them in its proper framework in order for the connection to be made well. That is why, if in this Working Party we talk of the social dimension of globalization, we will not lose the original trade aspect. Yet I truly believe that from an analytical and even from a political point of view, it will permit us to discuss it in a way that helps us understand much better the whole process and the different roles that different parts of the global economy play in relation to the world of work.

What are we proposing in order to do this? It is the notion of integrated thinking. This is not just the old multidisciplinary work in which you take expertise from different disciplines and you try to put them together to harmonize their perspectives. When you have a new reality, like the global economy, the nature of policies and the nature of the interactions are inevitably different from those of the international economy we had in the 1960s and 1970s. We have to find ways to understand these issues better.

So there is a very fundamental and strong component of knowledge in the future work of this Working Party. One example is the interaction between social and economic policies, which needs to be better integrated. As you well know, the problem with the Asian crisis was that we had concentrated too much on employment and too little on social protection. Social efficiency and economic efficiency need to go together. On issues like these I think that in this Working Party we want to have dialogue and consensus building. Let us make it a creative place. Leave the ghosts outside the door.

These are some of the types of issues that we will be facing as an institution and that this Working Party can deal with. These ideas are developed in paragraphs 19, 25 and 26, and very rightly many

of you recall paragraph 101 of our previous document. There you have a set of more focused, more specific issues that we may want to examine.

In terms of institutional organization, what we have done is to create an International Policy Group. I want to thank you for the support that many of you have given to this idea. The mandate of the group was explained in the budget document of November last year. Previously, work done by the Office to support the Working Party was handled by making ad hoc allocations of resources. What we have now done with the present budget is to put this work on a sure footing.

Some of you asked about the study unit we plan to set up. Actually, we did not need to go into that level of detail in describing our internal organization within the International Policy Group. Our intention is that the study unit be geared to the more analytical long-term research of the Group.

The other question concerned the advisory committee, which is again internal. The International Policy Group, which is servicing your Working Party and dialoguing with international organizations, needs to be linked to the day-to-day work of the ILO. So the advisory committee is an internal committee to strengthen linkage with the rest of the Organization. What we are driving at is internal intellectual coherence, involving linkage with the four technical sectors and also with the Institute.

Finally, it is clear that given the importance that you give to the Working Party, it is not with the three Professional staff members of the Policy Group, with partial support from others, that we will be able to meet the demands. I believe that this will require some technical cooperation funds, some extra-budgetary funds.

The other broad area which I wanted to talk about is dialogue with other institutions. Of course, the integrated thinking that we are promoting should be something that stems from the multilateral system. Before getting here I was President of the Economic and Social Council twice. That is the place where coordination between organizations is supposed to happen, but in practice the extent of coordination is limited. On some issues ECOSOC does produce results which I think are important, but in this area of integrated thinking there are limitations and we have not advanced sufficiently.

Our attitude has been to say that the ILO is a team player. And this has been the message that I have been transmitting to the rest of the multilateral system – you now have an ILO that wants to be a team player within the multilateral system and we believe that we have some ideas that we would like to put on the table and to discuss with you. Deepening our own knowledge of the impact of the global economy on the world of work can be of use to the rest of the system and can be done with its cooperation.

Let me refer then to WTO and the Bretton Woods institutions and say some words on UNCTAD. Many of you have asked what is it that we are doing with WTO. The situation is the following. The WTO is a formal observer in all ILO organs, and we have just heard the representative of the WTO speak to us here. They are invited to the Conference, the Governing Body, seminars and other activities that we have, whenever it appears that their voice is relevant. We send them documents for comment, including the last product of this Working Party.

And for some activities we are invited to the WTO, in a limited way. The ILO is invited to the Ministerial Conference without a right to speak, but does not have formal observer status in the WTO.

When I arrived here, people asked, what will you do about the relationship with the WTO? Let me refer to my experience last year. After I took up my post at the ILO, I first had to wait until the WTO had chosen its Director-General. When my counterpart was chosen – and I have excellent relations with Mike Moore – we were in the midst of the preparation of Seattle. At that time, any public statement I made was liable to misinterpretation or misuse by the different parties to the debate.

So I decided to publicly say only that the Director-General of the ILO will not give an opinion on the debate that is going on in WTO. If and when a decision is taken there, I will take that decision to the Governing Body of ILO who will then decide the ILO position.

So now we are after Seattle. My personal belief is that dialogue on complex issues like these is possible in the framework of this Working Party. If we leave the ghost outside the room then we can do it, if we bring the ghost into the room then it would make no sense. I am perfectly prepared to sit down with Mike Moore to talk, to see what things can be usefully discussed together: for instance, there may be research areas or other things, in full knowledge of the different opinions that constituents in both organizations have on the substance of issues.

The fact is that WTO is already present and participating in our discussion and we can develop our cooperation on that basis, in line with the Singapore Declaration, provided we understand that this Working Party has decided to leave certain issues aside. So if that is what you would like to see happen, I have no problem with that.

In relation to the Bretton Woods institutions, let me say the following. I have worked hard on our cooperation with the World Bank and the IMF and we now have observer status on the policy committees of both organizations. Our collaboration with the World Bank is moving extremely well. What we did was to put side by side the Bank's Comprehensive Development Framework with the ILO's Decent Work framework presented to the Conference, to see how they mesh. And out of that came many potential initiatives for collaboration. Among other things, the Bank has been putting enormous emphasis on ownership by countries of their comprehensive development policies, so the tripartite structure of the ILO is of interest to them. Ownership means dialoguing with a country, and not only with the country's government but also workers and employers, among others, so the space represented by the ILO brings added value to our relations with the World Bank.

We have talked with the Bank about incorporating the Declaration into the checklist of things that they discuss with countries. We made a strong point that employment and enterprise creation is part of solving poverty, you cannot deal with poverty exclusively in terms of education or health, or empowerment or gender consciousness, because you can be educated and healthy and empowered and gender conscious and yet be unemployed. So you need to put employment into the picture, and I think that we are agreed on that. We discussed the possibility of working together on a number of pilot countries and a number of other things. My perception is that the potential for collaboration with the World Bank is rather big given their emphasis on poverty reduction and national ownership of development policies.

Also, I believe that our relationship with UNCTAD is important: it is an institution that has a particular perspective and has been traditionally trying to represent and reflect the sensitivities and the ways in which developing countries see development and trade problems. I think that it is useful also for us to have that type of input and to have a close relationship that permits us to be sensitive to those types of analysis, and that is the reason why I participated in the UNCTAD X Conference in Bangkok.

Let me end by saying that in practical terms, between this discussion and when we take it up again with the Governing Body, it would be important to clarify what subjects we can take up in the next meeting. We need to draw from all of your comments what would be the general framework.

And I would like to end with the word Mr. Tabani used – “trust” – and the fact that this Working Party has succeeded because a certain level of trust has been developed. Of all the characteristics that I mentioned at the beginning, that is probably the most important one and I would truly invite you from the Office perspective to hold on to that, because as you all know in the international scenario, that is very difficult to construct. We have been able to do it here in this Working Party; let us try to keep that approach and let us then try to use it to deal with complex issues and to help us actually bite the bullet on some of these questions, knowing that we are not a policy-making organ here, that there are no decisions to be taken here. It is a place to reflect, to dialogue, to think together, but above all to be creative in terms of responding to the realities of today, and I think that this is the essence of what you have been expressing in the course of today, so thank you very much for your comments.