



Provisional Record

Eighty-ninth Session, Geneva, 2001

Fifth sitting

Tuesday, 12 June 2001, 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Parrot

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

The PRESIDENT (Mr. PARROT) — We shall now resume the discussion on the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General.

Mr. IMSON (*Government delegate, Philippines*) — Fellow delegates from the Government, Workers' and Employers' sectors.

I am deeply honoured today to speak before you on the very day that the Philippine people celebrate their 103rd anniversary of independence.

At the outset, the Philippine delegation would like to express its gratitude to all for allowing our Secretary of Labor and Employment, the Honourable Patricia A. Sto. Tomas, to serve as President of this Conference. Indeed, this opportunity brings honour to all of us and our country, especially as the Philippines is serving in this capacity for the second time since 1975.

I would like to congratulate the Director-General for his comprehensive Report on *Reducing the decent work deficit: A global challenge*. The Report informs us of institutional developments that could effectively push the goal of decent work in a globalizing economy. These include the adoption of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and initiatives such as the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (MNE Declaration), new instruments of social dialogue, voluntary private initiatives and socially responsible investments.

Our main task at this session of the Conference is to translate these institutional arrangements into concrete programmes of action at national level, consistent with the ILO's vision of promoting social justice and eliminating poverty. It is also our objective to make programmes inclusive, so that all sectors can progressively share in the promises of globalization. To do so, we should expand the base of stakeholders and partners by encouraging participation beyond the traditional tripartite alliance with workers' and employers' organizations. This means we must involve, as we now do in the Philippines, civil society and informal sector organizations in debates on development and in the pursuit of development initiatives.

The Director-General's Report offers a suitable framework to link the other items on the agenda, namely safety and health in agriculture, promotion of cooperatives and social security.

The discussion of safety and health in agriculture is taking place with a view to the adoption of a Convention and a Recommendation on this subject. Our shared resolve is to promote and sustain employment in this sector, enhance its productivity and facilitate its forward and backward linkage in the economy. There is a need for ILO action to promote member States and provide member States with proper guidelines to promote health and safety and employment compatibility.

The second item on the agenda is cooperatives. We must examine the desirability of evolving new and universally acceptable standards to give cooperatives a more direct role in addressing the socio-economic issues related to unemployment and social exclusion. We must be concerned with social balance in the process of standard setting. The very nature of cooperatives can be incompatible with restrictive regulation. If we are to adopt international standards, the standards must encourage rather than control their formation and growth.

The third item on the agenda is social security. In the *World Employment Report*, social insecurity and erosion of social protection have been identified as the most difficult social problems at the start of this millennium. The Director-General has also acknowledged this social protection gap, with only about 20 per cent of the world's workers under adequate social protection. We need a more coherent approach, in conjunction with international financial institutions, to evolve a social security agenda that can sustain all working people regardless of the employment arrangements covering them.

The items on the agenda are seen to strengthen the groundwork for decent work as a universal aspiration. Reducing the work deficit is not only a matter of promoting quality of work life. Of even more importance is the question of creating work and employment opportunities, whether within or outside our countries, for there will be no decent work to speak of if there is no full, productive and freely chosen employment.

Indeed, much work has to be done to attain the goals of decent work. To make a difference in our working people's lives, we must align our perspectives and priorities with the imperatives of development with a human dimension. More than ever we need the convergence of our programmes and approaches in developing the social road map for our workers.

Finally we have the sacred duty to win, in the world of work, the war against poverty, by closing the gaps of social, political and economic inequities that for centuries have burdened the world's population.

Mr. TATEISI (*Employers' delegate, Japan*) — I would like to begin by saying that this year's Director-

General's Report is an outstanding achievement that comprehensively describes the issues faced and the future directions towards the goal of decent work.

All people, I believe, desire to live meaningful lives according to their own lights, and the concept of decent work expresses the aim of achieving this kind of positive working life well. As the Report states, decent work is a direction. It does not refer to any specific pattern, and naturally priorities as to necessary actions will differ depending on the occasion, the country or the society concerned and should be decided through social dialogue.

As far as the issues related to achieving decent work in Japan are concerned, our foremost priority is employment creation. As you know, Japan has suffered a long-running recession and structural change is taking place, leaving the unemployment rate at the high level of nearly 5 per cent. The Tripartite Council on Employment Measures was established at the behest of the Japan Federation of Employers' Associations (NIKKEIREN) and the Japanese Trade Union Confederation (JTUC-RENGO) in 1998 when the employment issue became more pressing, and the requests made by this Council were reflected in the subsequent emergency economic measures taken.

But employers and workers are not relying solely on the government; they are taking measures under their own initiative as well. In October 1999, NIKKEIREN and JTUC-RENGO issued a joint Declaration on Employment Security which described the respective roles these two bodies should play in maintaining employment. Later, they set up a joint project on employment stability and issued policy recommendations. These activities have been also taking place at the regional level. Furthermore, NIKKEIREN implemented an on-the-job training and trial employment project for disabled persons, who face a particularly difficult time, and I am pleased to report that 65 per cent of those who underwent training in these two years (over 4,000 persons) were hired as regular employees.

Japan already has an established framework for tripartite participation in policy-making through the Industry and Labour Roundtable Conference and an advisory council system. NIKKEIREN has recommended a total of 90 individuals for participation in roughly 30 advisory councils. In addition to this institutional framework, we employers and workers have the firm conviction that it is our responsibility to discuss directions for change in the labour market, social security, the tax system and education, which provide the foundations for society, in order to establish a social consensus and press for a political and administrative response.

The Director-General's Report states that an integrated policy approach is necessary to bring about decent work. Although the ideal is social progress taking place in harmony with economic progress, this does not necessarily occur automatically. That is why we must always work to achieve social progress through the decent work campaign. On the other hand, there can be no social progress to develop stability without economic progress. There can be no decent work without healthy economic activity. We need a clear understanding of the relationship between economic and social progress.

There is a tendency to focus only on the negative aspects of multinational corporations but we need to look at the beneficial effects of their activities as well.

Through technology transfers, employment creation and vocational education, multinationals are making a major contribution to poverty eradication and regional development.

I am convinced that employers must act according to broad responsibilities and with high moral standards for the sake of stakeholders, and not merely for the pursuit of profit. In addition, the positive partnership of workers and employers, based on a thorough awareness of enterprises' role in the creation of wealth and employment, is certain to bring about social progress in the end. In that sense, a truly integrated approach on the part of the ILO is required.

Mr. MENDOZA (*Workers' delegate, Philippines*) — On behalf of the Philippine labour delegation, I wish to convey my warmest congratulations to the President on her election to this 89th Session of the International Labour Conference.

All of us Filipinos are deeply proud that after 26 years another distinguished Filipino is presiding over the deliberations of this august Conference.

It cannot come at a more opportune time, as this very same day the Philippines celebrates its 103rd Independence Day.

Let us also take this opportunity to congratulate the Director-General, the Officers of the Conference and the staff of the ILO, for the commendable and outstanding work they have done in the past year.

I am particularly proud to be here today, after we have restored democracy and decency in Philippine governance. I am happy to say that organized labour played a crucial role in this restoration.

The restoration was a product of unprecedented cooperation among members of civil society, particularly organized labour, students and responsible sectors of the business community.

I am proud, yet we must be realistic, for the changing of regimes alone cannot change the lives of our over 77 million people.

The Report of the Director-General, titled *Reducing the decent work deficit: A global challenge*, is very comprehensive and timely. It focuses on what every working person aspires for — decent work — which for many of us remains very elusive. The Report also describes gaps or "decent work deficits" — a source of great concern because there is much to be done.

There is an urgent need to act decisively on measures to close the gaps that expose men and women to indignities in their work. We require positive actions in terms of upholding dignity, relating to security and voice, gender equality and solidarity, fundamental rights at work, social dialogue, social justice and sustainable environmental practices.

In the Philippines, poverty eradication has always been the priority of governments. The current administration is promoting a framework of governance that puts the worker and the family at the centre of all efforts. The labour movement believes in this initiative.

At the international level, we support the idea that the ILO must be empowered to pursue the goal of placing a social floor under the global economy in ways which are acceptable to both developing and developed countries.

The other items in the agenda of this 89th Session — health and safety in agriculture, cooperatives and social protection — can be seen as part of this social floor.

Faced with the challenges, Philippine labour is committed to pursuing decent work. We are committed to productivity and industrial peace. We are committed to social dialogue and partnership for social progress.

We are committed, but only when and where our rights are protected and respected. The ILO's challenge for affordability without sacrificing social efficiency appears a sound approach.

Our collective minds should find ways to guarantee employment and working conditions which are decent and non-exploitative.

"Labour flexibility" in governments' economic, trade and employment policies does not meet the standard. It suits the "wants" of some sectors while destroying every fabric of fundamental labour rights.

The challenge before us today is urgent and clear.

Our response should be to replace our present timidity with resolve, our half-actions with bold programmes, and the illusion produced by words with the conviction born of concrete acts.

Prolonged inaction can only increase the decent work deficit and hasten the confrontation which we are now trying to avoid.

Original Spanish: Mr. ABASCAL (Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, Mexico) — It is a great honour for me to pass on to you the fraternal greetings of the people and Government of Mexico.

In July 2000, both women and men in Mexico ushered in a new, historic era: the construction of a more democratic and fairer country which is both stronger and based on the rule of law. Through our actions and through dialogue and cooperation with other nations, we want to build a future which reflects our principles, values, needs and aspirations. Today, Mexico is both at peace and full of hope.

We very much agree with the objectives described in the Report submitted by the Director-General. This painful deficit that social inequality implies must be bridged. Social justice demands, first of all, more and better jobs for everyone. Today, the new Government of Mexico faces the challenge of improving working conditions and social security for Mexican men and women.

Mexico has started to build firm foundations in order to attain the objective of decent work for all. Throughout the years, courageous Mexican men and women have conquered irrevocable social labour rights. These are rights which have given the Mexican people both stability and progress.

We very much welcome the topics chosen for the 89th Session of the International Labour Conference.

The tripartite approach characteristic of the ILO will contribute to ensuring that discussion of such topics will be directed towards fostering productive employment, but under conditions which have respect and the promotion of human dignity at their heart. Mexico will contribute through its commitment to achieving that goal.

Mexico is undergoing a profound and longed-for transition process.

In order to achieve change in the workplace, several strategies have been defined, that tie in with the reality of globalization and the interdependence of Mexico with the rest of the world. These strategies are based upon the inclusion of all the players in the world of work. That means there has to be fair treatment and respect for the autonomy of both labour and

business organizations. Strategies are also built upon gradual change; upon dialogue that generates consensus; upon the respect of law; upon fighting corruption and upon the concept of government as a promoter rather than a substitute for the factors of production, and these strategies lead to five lines of action.

First of all, promoting a new labour and business culture which will place the individual at the heart of economic activity. If the economy and the efforts by economic agents do not raise living standards and indeed the quality of life of everyone or strengthen the family, then they really are useless.

Secondly, modernization of labour law with the consensus of productive sectors and fully respecting the social rights of workers.

Thirdly, the modernization of public federal administrations, in order to make it more effective and a force for stability in the labour field.

Fourthly, promoting freedom and democracy within the labour movement and strengthening its autonomy.

Fifthly, strengthening Mexico's international labour relations by complying fully with existing commitments and by promoting our interests abroad.

The Mexican Government is committed to the aim of generating conditions so that our country may offer productive employment or self-employment for all.

The concept of decent work coincides with Mexican aspirations, because we believe in the enormous value of the dignity of every human being; because we know that if prosperity is not shared, it will certainly not last long; it has been proven that foreign investment goes to countries that have strong and dynamic domestic markets based on high-employment levels and with a highly trained, versatile and well-paid labour force.

As in the case of decent work, the principle of equality for all inspires our activities. The effort that Mexican women have put into the creation of modern Mexico has been invaluable: their day-to-day work both inside and outside the home fills us with pride.

Women that every day enter the productive sector must see their efforts rewarded with an income that fully corresponds to their performance; they must be able to climb the labour ladder at the same pace as men. At the same time, the transcendental role and dignity of women who work within their home must be reappraised. Teachers, agricultural workers, business women, public officials or administrators of the family income, women deserve public policies that acknowledge their dual workload and break through the so-called "glass ceiling" on their professional development.

The Government of President Vicente Fox is committed to fighting for the full and broad recognition of Mexican women's rights and the value of their work.

Just as we strive for the respect of the rights of workers in our country, we want to see a world where the value and human dignity of every worker is fully respected, regardless of his or her ethnic or social origin or migratory status. Economic globalization which does not make decent work a universal right as well, in line with the dignity of human individuals, would polarize humanity and would be quite unsustainable. But we still have time.

In Mexico, we know that decent work is the natural expression of human solidarity, and it is the most efficient means for individual, family and social development and progress. We also know that there is no

source of wealth other than everyday work, the determination and the passion of 100 million Mexican men and women. We are proud of this wealth and we want to increase it.

I am particularly pleased to confirm Mexico's commitment to the values and principles that underpin the work of the ILO. We want a more humane, fairer, unified and generous world for our children. Through the ILO we will participate and strive to influence this kind of home we want to bequeath to future generations.

Ms. BRADSHAW (*Minister of Labour, Canada*) — To begin, I want to congratulate the President and the Vice-President on their election. I am particularly pleased to address this session when a fellow Canadian, Mr. Jean-Claude Parrot is presiding.

In his Report, the Director-General identified a decent work deficit in our global economy. This deficit is a source of profound concern for all of us. If globalization can motivate nations to work together to provide decent work for the millions of people who have little or none; then globalization should be, and will be, welcomed; but the conflict surrounding globalization will only grow if ordinary working people are left behind, and poverty, unemployment and a lack of basic labour rights are not addressed. The extent to which we achieve decent work, which means a decent life for all our citizens, will be the true measure, and decide the future of globalization.

I want to turn now to the Director-General's theme of challenge, which he sees as an evolving agenda for the ILO and its constituents. He has called on us to be open to new activities and initiatives. I commend him for this vision of openness. However, we must not underestimate the challenge.

(The speaker continues in French.)

We recognize without question that many major problems, such as the protection of the environment, are global problems that cannot be solved by one nation within its own borders. We know that no economy can prosper without being involved in the global economy. We also know that in a global economy, effective labour standards in our own countries can best be sustained if they are supported at the global level.

(The speaker continues in English.)

Technology, international trade and global finance are not the true challenges of globalization; rather, they are the focus of globalization. The true challenge is what we face as Ministers of Labour, as labour leaders, and as fair employers; that is, how to make these powerful forces serve the needs of the common person, the working mothers and fathers, the children, true ordinary people who must live and work in this global system. As the Director-General says, we must be open to new solutions.

The Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work marks an historic global consensus on core labour standards that all nations should respect. It grows in stature every year and serves an ever-expanding range of purposes. For instance, Canada and Costa Rica made the Declaration the basis of our Labour Cooperation Agreement which we signed earlier this year, together with our free trade agreement.

(The speaker continues in French.)

The decent work programme adopted by the ILO has set a new goal for the Organization, but our task, of course, is not yet completed. The Organization must continue to seek new ways to settle the problems relating to the social dimension of globalization. If the ILO does not put forward any new solutions, people will look for them elsewhere. They are already strongly tempted to submit their labour problems to other international organizations which they believe to be capable of dealing with them more quickly and effectively.

(The speaker continues in English.)

If you believe, as I do, that international labour issues should be addressed here in the ILO, then the ILO must offer equally effective procedures and solutions to respond to these issues. We must ensure that the ILO's standards remain relevant, and that its supervisory mechanisms are both effective and transparent. This is essential to the Organization's continued credibility. The Director-General's Report urges this Organization not to be afraid to reach beyond itself. He has called on us to be open to new alliances.

In the Americas we are building these new alliances through the Summit of the Americas process, and the Conference of Ministers of Labour of the Americas. Canada will host this conference in October, and I look forward to working with all our partners, including the ILO, to address labour issues in the hemisphere.

(The speaker continues in French.)

The challenge of globalization also requires cooperation amongst international institutions, and we encourage the Director-General in all his efforts to inject dynamism into the multilateral system in the interests of social justice around the world.

(The speaker continues in English.)

The ILO continues to be the only institution where workers, employers and governments work together to develop solutions. We need that cooperation more than ever if we are going to overcome the decent work deficit. Let us never forget that what we do as ministers of labour is the future of all of our children.

Mgr. MARTIN (*Apostolic Nuncio, The Holy See*) — I join with those who before me have expressed their congratulations to our President on her election, as well as to the Vice-Presidents.

The ILO is one of the oldest members of the family of international organizations. Its mandate, however, remains always pertinent and of vital interest. Its activities continue to affect the lives and the future of all the citizens of the world. As the previous speaker said, it is young people especially who know that work is the key to the realization of their hopes for personal fulfilment, for a satisfying and secure family life and, indeed, for the prosperity and peaceful coexistence of peoples.

The theme of work needs to become even more central in the international reflection of our day, when human aspirations have to be realized within a dramatically changed situation of economic and political

interdependence. It is within this broad context that the theme of decent work has emerged as an overarching theme of the ILO's policy, a policy which stresses the qualitative aspects of work and its deepest connection with human dignity. Just over one year ago, at the Jubilee Gathering of Workers in Rome, Pope John Paul II said "it is ever more necessary to establish a global coalition in favour of decent work".

Twenty years earlier, he had published an encyclical letter on work — *Laborem Exercens* — which placed the human person at the centre of his reflections. Many of the elements of that document have been taken up in the Director-General's Report, especially in his reflections on the significance of work. It is neither technology nor the market which are the primary subjects of work; it is the human person. And we realize today as never before that the decisive force in production is not just capital, but the human person — the human person with his or her knowledge, creativity and capacity for innovation and for organization. So an agenda for decent work must look not only at increasing the quantity of work and ensuring access to work for all. It must also address the quality of work, so that in work the human person achieves fulfilment as a human being, and indeed in a sense becomes "more a human being".

The International Labour Organization, with its important network of Conventions and Recommendations, has made pioneering and painstaking efforts in this area, building up a wide consensus. We must ensure that consensus now becomes universal. We must find common strategies which show that increased productivity and competitiveness are not incompatible with an improvement in the quality of work, even while bearing in mind the variety of local conditions.

The delegation of the Holy See was happy to note the references in the Director-General's Report to the relationship between work and the family. He notes that "income and the satisfaction derived from work has a direct impact on family life and on family relationships". In today's world, we must ensure that workers and their families are not disproportionately exposed to the effects of economic shocks. Even though the statistics are there for all to see, we have not yet drawn the lessons of the effects on poor workers of so many recent economic crises or adjustment programmes. Policies of economic development must always include the provision of adequate social protection and safety nets for the poor. The fight against poverty is today the dominant aim of intergovernmental cooperation in development. The concept of decent work must be integrated more effectively into development and poverty programmes. One of the concrete ways of verifying the success of the poverty reduction strategies which the poorest countries are being asked to elaborate and to apply, is to ask how far have they improved access to work, both in its qualitative and quantitative aspects? The inspiration of our initiatives to fight poverty is moving away from an assistance-based approach to one founded on empowerment, on enabling people to realize their God-given potentials. The movement to human empowerment must inevitably pass along the way of decent work.

Original French: Mr. VERONESE (*Workers' delegate, France*) — The ILO agenda helps us to better understand the main factors necessary for the universal aspiration of decent work to become reality.

However, the Director-General in his Report quite rightly emphasizes what he calls the decent work deficit. Should the Conference not first of all ask itself what additional and relevant steps could be taken to make sure that the fundamental rights at work adopted by all parties become accessible to everyone without any restrictions or haggling in order to take up this challenge of decent work? The violation of such rights cannot provide a legitimate comparative advantage. They must be observed by everyone, including the WTO and the financial institutions.

For the workers, if we wish to progress towards decent work, we must combine the development of education with full employment policies and the struggle against poverty in order to reduce inequalities and guarantee to each human being dignity, equality, freedoms and security for himself and his family. This is why the CGT of France and its trade union partners, together with other trade unions around the world, have raised the issue of a different system of sharing wealth. It is in connection with this approach that we welcome the ratification by the French Parliament of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), and that we are participating in establishing pluri-annual technical and professional forms of collaboration in response to the urgent needs of local populations, designed to create jobs and income for adults. It is a case of moving towards the objective of eliminating child labour.

It is first and foremost a question of political will which calls on States and employers to act. Of what use is it to reach consensus here when every day all over the world workers are faced with the frantic demands of financial profitability, in a globalized economic war with its dominators, its dominated and multitudes of men and women who are left out of the equation; where ordinary methods of management are designed regardless of balance and of social and democratic cohesion? The ILO is making enormous efforts to develop programmes demonstrating the appropriateness of a global response based on the promotion of men and women at work. The General Confederation of Labour (CGT) thinks that we ought to be going further and be moving more rapidly because contradictions are becoming increasingly acute between the development of productive capacities and the worsening of social and developmental inequalities, and the rise in insecurity.

It is in the light of these realities that awareness is growing, that critical attitudes are developing and that people are being stirred to act, from Seattle to Porto Alegre to the Peoples' Summit of the Americas, to seek and elaborate alternative policies, to open up new perspectives compatible with sustainable development. These social movements must be echoed in this organization, the ILO, in our strategic objectives. The workers of France therefore propose that we focus on the following points:

- first of all, we must strengthen our technical resources to provide assistance and expertise for the impetus and the follow-up to be given to the strategic objectives and the widespread implementation of fundamental rights at work;
- secondly, in the work of the Global Employment Forum in November 2001, we must very clearly state the reasons for a far-reaching reform of the international financial institutions to bring about a more effective cancellation of debt, its expansion to more countries and its application for multination-

al creditors, particularly the IMF and the World Bank; for a better orientation of the policies which these institutions lay down, focused as a priority on needs in respect of health care, education, social protection and gender equality;

- thirdly, we must impose obligations on multinational companies in countries where they set up business, in particular in EPZs. These obligations must be measurable in the areas of vocational training and university studies, in terms of new stable jobs linked to the creation of enterprises and processing industries;
- fourthly, we must seek to extend and improve social security systems, relying on the investment which they represent for the improvement of health and the social cohesion of our populations and consequently economic and social effectiveness in our changing societies.

Now we suspend this session and it will start again immediately after the Special High-Level Session on the launch of the Time-Bound Programme on the Worst Forms of Child Labour.

(The sitting adjourned at 11 a.m. and resumed at 12.15 p.m.)

Original Arabic: Mr. KANSO (*Minister of Labour, Lebanon*) — It gives me pleasure to deliver the statement of Lebanon to this august Conference, which constitutes the largest international forum under the banner of the United Nations, and which shoulders a cardinal and permanent pledge that is reflected in the first lines of the Preamble to the Constitution of the ILO: “universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice”.

It is true that lasting world peace, which is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and in the constitutions of all United Nations agencies including the ILO, needs to be founded on social justice, and, first and foremost, on respect for the national rights and basic freedoms of the peoples of our world.

Social justice must be respected in every country of the world, and all peoples must have control of their land and its resources. Yet there are those whose land has been usurped and whose freedom is bound by restrictions. These people are the victims of the worst forms of repression, which are visited on them by the countries that have invaded them and that have denied them their national rights.

This was the case for South Lebanon, and is the case for Palestine and the Syrian Arab Golan, which are still under Israeli occupation. The rights of the workers and the people of the region are being continually violated.

The social struggle is part and parcel of the national struggle; therefore, those who need employment to ensure social justice should be able to work in a free and independent country. This was finally achieved in South Lebanon, which suffered 20 years of Israeli occupation and non-respect for the rights of its workers.

Original French: The PRESIDENT — I would like to give the floor to Mr. Waxman for a point of order.

Mr. WAXMAN (*Adviser and substitute delegate, Israel*) — I would like to refer to the ground rules set here yesterday morning by the President of this Session of the Conference. She clearly stated that these

issues were to be discussed only at the Special Sitting on the Situation of Workers of the Occupied Arab Territories on Wednesday, 14 June and not in the general debate, which is dedicated to the remainder of the Report. We would ask that you ensure that all speakers obey the rules set by the President.

Original French: The PRESIDENT — I would like to remind the speaker that he should limit himself to the subject of the general debate. There will be a special sitting to discuss the issues he has raised.

Original Arabic: Mr. KANSO — We would like to endorse the Report of the Director-General, which seeks to ensure decent work for all at the start of the third millennium and to provide legal and social protection for workers for the progress and welfare of humanity.

I would like to announce before this august assembly that in Lebanon we are preparing a new draft law on labour that conforms with international labour standards, and in particular with the Conventions that have been or will be ratified in the future by Lebanon.

We are also preparing a draft law on retirement and social protection to be a substitute for the end-of-service system, and we wish to strengthen the tripartite institutions, especially the national employment institutions, the social security fund, the Economic and Social Council and the labour tribunals.

As regards child employment, we have worked with IPEC in conformity with the international Conventions, and we have amended the relevant national legislation on the elimination of the worst forms of child labour.

After the emancipation of South Lebanon one year ago, the ILO sent a high-level multidisciplinary mission that prepared a comprehensive report on the requirements for social development and the creation of job opportunities for the citizens of this region. We intend to follow up this report so that workers and employers may finally lead normal lives after the 20 years of bombings, killings, suppression and deportation, as well as the scourge of remaining landmined areas.

In conclusion, I would like this august Conference to know that Lebanon, the cradle of the world's first written language, will continue to fight for progress and peace for humankind according to the principles of social justice and freedom.

Original Russian: Mr. STOYAN (*Workers' delegate, Ukraine*) — Allow me first to congratulate the President upon her election to this high post and to wish her every success in conducting the work of the Conference. The Report of the Director-General on the provision of decent and productive work in conditions of freedom and equality is exhaustive and objective. We support the Director-General when he says that the task is not simply to create jobs, but to create jobs which are acceptable. This is what promoted us in Ukraine in 1999, after the international financial crisis, to include a section — the first of its kind — on “fostering development and providing productive employment” in the general agreement between trade unions, the Government and employers. This helped bring about a gradual improvement of the economic situation.

The economic recovery measures adopted thanks to pressure from the trade unions were at variance

with the memorandum of the International Monetary Fund. Last year, for the first time in Ukraine's recent history, the gross domestic product (GDP) increased in all sectors. This has given the Government the opportunity to pay off much of the arrears in wages paid from the state budget, pensions and student grants. Miners and others in the energy sector have begun once again receiving their wages in monetary form. However, the unions do not consider that there has been a breakthrough in recent years in ensuring the constitutional right to work and to receive decent and timely remuneration. Nor has there been a noticeable improvement in social protection that would make it possible to adopt the major changes. The problem of providing for decent work with an economic recovery has become still more urgent. The unions cannot accept that a country with nearly 30 million people able to work employs only 20 million. A third of our workforce is not used in generating GDP. This places an additional burden on the workers. This situation is made still worse by the particularly ineffective use of the labour force. Last year, for example, 5 million people were underemployed or were from time to time forced to take leave without pay. At our insistence, the President in his address to the Parliament set a target for the Government to create 600,000 new jobs this year. The Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine is lobbying for the Government to draw up and implement a general scheme for job creation with sufficient resources for the priority sectors of the economy. For the time being, growth has mainly taken place in the informal sector, owing to increased competition. For the trade unions, it is particularly important to overcome the artificial lowering of wages. Last year, with a rise in GDP of 6 per cent and an increase in productivity of 16 per cent, wages fell by 0.9 per cent. The share of wages in GDP also declined. This year and next, with over 70 per cent of workers receiving wages lower than the subsistence level, the Government still intends to keep pay increases under the GDP growth rate. In its negotiations with the Government, the Federation of Trade Unions has requested that a proposal should be submitted to Parliament setting the minimum wage at 165 hryvnia, or \$30. Although that is just half of the minimum subsistence level, the Government rejected our proposal. The Federation is continuing to insist that measures be taken to bring the minimum wage closer to the subsistence level. This should be a provision of the General Agreement for 2002-2004.

An important concern for the trade unions is the timely payment of remuneration. At the beginning of May, arrears for unpaid wages amounted to 4.5 billion hryvnia.

Decent work cannot be ensured in Ukraine without eliminating the enormous gap between the minimum subsistence levels set by the trade unions and real social guarantees. Minimum wage is currently 38 per cent of the minimum subsistence level, and the minimum pension and unemployment assistance amount to just 12 per cent. According to the calculations of our experts, at the present rate of increase the minimum wage and pensions will not reach the level of the minimum subsistence level before the year 2025.

Safe working conditions are not ensured in Ukraine. Some 3.3 million persons work in conditions that do not meet the occupational safety and health requirements. The number of workers in this situation is not declining; it is rising.

At many enterprises the main means of production have outlived their standard periods of useful operation and now represent a threat to the life and health of the workers. At the same time investment in their modernization is constantly falling. In Ukraine there are some 40,000 workers injured every year, including about 1,500 fatalities, and no radical measures are being taken to improve the situation.

The situation of decent work would be worse in Ukraine but for the active and consistent activities of the trade unions, which see through reforms for the majority of citizens, and not for individual groups. I believe that the main task of the ILO in the twenty-first century must be to disseminate countries' experiences in creating the conditions for decent work, which is the main value and gauge of human progress.

Ms. PONCINI (*Representative, International Federation of University Women*) — Allow me on behalf of the organizations I represent — the International Federation of University Women, the International Federation of Business and Professional Women and, as President of the Geneva-based Committee on the Status of Women of the Conference of non-governmental organizations (CONGO) — to warmly congratulate the President, as well as the Vice-Presidents, on their election, and I am also happy to join you in celebrating Philippine Independence Day.

As a compatriot and as a woman, I am especially proud to see Ms. A. Sto. Tomas preside over this very august body, which sadly remains male-dominated. As from last Friday, 449 men against 74 women delegates were registered; only eight women ministers in contrast to 34 men, 494 male employers and 80 women, 547 male workers' representatives and only 96 women. In the year 2000, only 21.5 per cent were women. We are encouraged by the President's wisdom. She warned us against falling into the global black hole if we do not solve the perennial problems of inequality and poverty. We are heartened that she underscored the fundamental advocacy role of civil society for a globalization of inclusion, not exclusion. We are also pleased that our Committee, which represents over 80 international NGOs with membership totalling millions of women and thousands of men from rural grass-roots to university graduate levels, academics, business and unpaid working women, are volunteers who untiringly work towards the advancement of the status of women and for gender equality at work and in society at large.

We congratulate the Director-General, Juan Somavia, for his legendary common sense, strategic vision and courage. We are gratified to see in his Report that gender equality and social investment continue to be his priorities. One cannot ignore that the informal sector constitutes 90 per cent of employment, two-thirds of which are women workers. Women are forecast to be the dominant gender in the labour force in the decades ahead and policy-makers have to contend with this. They cannot continue to deny women, as major stakeholders, their rightful place at the decision-making table. If this continues, many of the failures of structural adjustment programmes would remain. We therefore call on the ILO, when preparing for next year's discussion on the informal sector, to bear in mind the vital role women play and to include them in their think-tanks, brainstorming sessions, research and organizational agendas, not as behind-the-scenes performers, but as frontline decision-making

actors. As had been rightly pointed out by the Canadian delegate at the discussions on social security, it is not sufficient to guarantee equal treatment. It must also be equitable, taking account of the different roles that were traditionally women's and men's and redressing inequalities through proactive measures.

When the Constitution of the ILO was chartered, 82 years ago, women in the labour force were a handful and limited to a few types of jobs. Today we are over 40 per cent across the globe and forecast to go over the 50 per cent mark in the next decade. Economic globalization, especially in the manufacturing sectors of export processing zones, has thrived because of the availability and exploitation of casual and precarious work of women and of child labour. The growing women single-headed households are increasing the ranks of income-generating population. Young and old women have advanced in higher education and are seeking jobs and pay commensurate with their qualifications. Women have created micro and small enterprises contributing to family survival, especially in times of massive unemployment and economic crisis in both developed and developing countries. It is perhaps time to review the ILO Constitution to meet challenges of globalization and to particularly revise article 3, because today, women are concerned and involved with all issues in the world of work and their presence should not remain an option but should be a right to equal representation, notably in decision-making organs, especially at the International Labour Conference, where policies and international instruments and standards are determined. As the Director-General says in his Report, "in the end, legitimacy comes from a sense of what is right and fair, whether reasonable demands are met, and whether local, national and global institutions can deliver what they have promised". We fully agree with the Director-General when he also said that "cohesive tripartism is the ILO's bedrock, but it will not be enough on its own. This has to be a house which is open to the rest of the world with other actors in the economic and cultural spheres of society who share our values", values of decent work and respect for rights at work that are non-discriminatory and universal.

Finally, we applaud Mr. Somavia's determination, particularly when he said that the ILO should be creative and vigilant in ensuring that commitment to gender equality should be integrated into the institutional and individual thinking and culture of the Organization.

Mr. OWUOR (*Employers' delegate, Kenya*) — The theme of this year's session of the Conference: *Reducing the decent work deficit: A global challenge*, offers delegates a window of opportunity to evaluate the extent to which both the Office and the ILO's global constituents have realized the vision which they set for themselves two years ago.

On the positive side, the following initiatives may be noted. The ILO is now more visible on the world stage as the social conscience of mankind. This is more so in its vigorous promotion of social dialogue and social protection within the framework of tripartism. Its effective marketing of the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work has been noticeable through its highly commendable IPEC Programme, particularly the successful promotion of the ratification by member states of the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).

As regards technical cooperation programmes, there are still, however, noticeable weaknesses in the coordination between headquarters and the field offices, thereby undermining the delivery rates of these programmes to the constituents.

The launching of the HIV/AIDS Programme and this year's publication of the ILO code of practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work, has placed the ILO at the centre of the war against this pandemic. HIV/AIDS is no longer just a health issue, it is a socio-economic time bomb, given its devastating prevalence with 36 million people infected worldwide, of which 23 million are in sub-Saharan Africa alone. It is particularly a labour issue as about 70 per cent of its victims fall within the productive 15-49 age bracket.

Last September, the Federation of Kenya Employers published its widely acclaimed rights-based code of conduct on HIV/AIDS in the workplace as its contribution to the war against the pandemic in Kenya.

My delegation hopes, therefore, that the ILO will lend its authority to the efforts made by developing countries to bring pressure to bear on pharmaceutical firms to exclude anti-retroviral drugs from the patenting system under the Trade-Related Aspects of International Property Rights. This will promote the affordability and accessibility of these drugs for millions of people living with HIV/AIDS, who are prematurely dying without receiving any treatment at all.

With regard to the ILO's Global Employment Agenda currently under preparation for the November 2001 Global Employment Forum, my delegation looks forward to a new initiative to address the social upheavals being created in developing countries by the globalization process. Without enterprises there can be no decent work. Since local industries are being destroyed by cheap imports in developing countries, no new industries are being created to replace them, with thousands of people losing their jobs, thereby exacerbating already serious poverty levels.

In terms of priorities, the ILO needs to allocate more of its resources for promoting its core mandate, particularly the strengthening of the institutional capacities of social partners so as to enable them to deliver effective services, including ILO programmes, to their members, and to spearhead the social agenda at the national level.

We beg to disagree with the Director-General, when he argues, on page 73 of the Report, that his persistent overtures to civil society organizations do not constitute a threat to the tripartite institution of the ILO. We consider this move to have the effect of undermining the very basis of the ILO's existence as a tripartite body. The inclusion of these bodies, some of which already enjoy observer status within the ILO, in ILO bodies or their "partnership" with the ILO will eventually give them a voice in determining labour standards at the ILO Conferences, as well as legitimize their involvement in collective agreements and labour matters at the national level, where they have no *locus standi* in the contractual relations between employers and workers. Already in some developing countries, some of the international NGOs are funding local representatives to engage in disruptive activities, which include inciting workers to be against legitimate trade union leaders, thus undermining the existing industrial order.

We hope, therefore, that the Director-General will reconsider his position on this matter.

On the Global Compact, my delegation fully endorses the ILO's involvement in the process and hopes that an appropriate mechanism will be devised to monitor its progress within the United Nations system. In this regard, we identify not only with its nine principles incorporating human rights and labour rights, but also those involving sustainable environmental management, including strict adherence by United Nations member countries to the Kyoto Protocol on global warming.

In conclusion, viewed as a part of the Global Compact, the ILO's decent work programme has some relevance to the developing world since it portends help to the poor for realising their long-cherished dreams of having access to decent incomes, decent clean drinking water, decent food, decent housing in a peaceful and secure environment, decent education and training for their children, decent medical care, and a decent retirement.

Mr. KARA (*Workers' delegate, Israel*) — I am very pleased that these plenary sittings of the Conference are devoted to discussing the Report of the Director-General and will examine how decent work might be achieved in practice at the national level and within the global economy. I want to thank the Director-General for that.

As stated in the Director-General's Report for the year 2001, the ILO agenda is summarized as the goal of decent work integrating the four strategic objectives of the Organization — fundamental principles and rights at work, employment, social protection, and social dialogue.

Decent work, in its broadest sense, aims to establish the equilibrium between the economic considerations and constraints that have become predominant in the last years, and the unfortunately neglected, but very important, factor of social needs. It goes without saying that, in these efforts to establish equilibrium, a heavy burden is laid on the shoulders of trade unions. This responsibility is further emphasized by the difficulties and challenges that unions have faced in the last two decades. There have been increasing difficulties, both in the external environment of union organization and action, and in the nature of the constituencies which unions seek to mobilize.

Externally, the economic environment has become harsher. Global competition has intensified, putting new pressures on national industrial relations regimes. Industrialized market economies have experienced a return to mass employment. Newly industrialized economies have become subject to the fluctuations of the global economy. The political environment has become far more unfavourable.

In some cases, this is linked with erosion of unions' representative status as the social partners, in part the consequence of decreasing membership. In some countries, there has been a growing unwillingness to accept trade unions as the collective representatives of employees. In others, while collective bargaining has survived, its scope has been reduced, and managements have established new forms of direct communication with employees as individuals. The expansion of multinational companies has meant that leading employers are able to escape the regulatory force of the national industrial relations system.

Internally, challenges stem from changes in the constituencies which unions seek to recruit and represent. Traditional, typical forms of employment have

been considerably reduced. To a great extent, atypical employment situations have become increasingly typical.

All these new patterns of employment render unionization much more difficult. Workers' tastes and expectations are changing, and the desire of the "weak" workers who would like to get organized is often opposed by employers.

As a starting point, unions must reconsider their strategies and tactics, and should ask two basic questions, namely how we can be relevant and how we can attract potential members who, until now, did not show an interest in unionization.

The Director-General's Report considered the issue of workers' and employers' representation as an important factor in relation to decent work, and stressed five particular areas of interest and activity: improving access through training, employability, life-long learning, representation and flexibility through the working world.

With your permission, I would like to suggest, in the light of these points of interest, five dimensions of activities which could, in my opinion, provide answers and solutions to the problems concerning trade unionists. These five dimensions that should be considered are flexibility, security, opportunity, democracy and community.

Flexibility should no longer be viewed uniquely as a means to harm workers and unions. There is a worker-oriented element in flexibility, and both workers and unions must make efforts to combine the flexibility needs of management with workers' rights and protection.

Security: there is significant scope for action at company and sectoral level, to influence the process of worker restructuring and technical innovation in the direction of upskilling rather than deskilling. In this context, unions can also play an important role.

Opportunity: in the past, many unions have favoured inflexible regulation out of the conviction that this provides the only safeguard against manipulation and exploitation by employers. In the current situation, this protection must be granted primarily by procedural rules which enhance individual discussion, and by active labour-market policies which provide an advantageous framework for career decisions. In both respects, unions have a vital role to perform.

Democracy: trade unions' democratic functions should address real grievances and concerns in ways that strengthen unions' legitimacy and appeal. Unquestionably, there is considerable scope to exercise this function by challenging the widespread current abuse of concepts of democracy at work and exposing the anti-democratic character of much that passes for human resources management.

Needless to say, unions' capacity to mount a credible campaign for greater democracy in employment will be severely weakened unless they can demonstrate their own democratic credentials. This poses an evident challenge to us to scrutinize and, if necessary, restructure our own representative capacity and internal processes of agenda-building and decision-making.

Community: in order to appeal to younger workers and other categories of workers, unions will have to develop alternative, locally based structures. Moving away from the bureaucratic formalities of traditional meeting to alternative, more participative, types of collective activity is a necessary part of organizational

innovation if unions are to appeal to a more diverse constituency.

Finally, by acting wisely and comprehensively in these five areas, and in close collaboration with the ILO, which leads the efforts to achieve social goals on the national and international level, unions will, I believe, regain power and influence and contribute in a very positive way to achieving the necessary equilibrium between the social partners for establishing a world of decent work.

Original French: Mr. EL MOKHAREK (*Workers' adviser, Morocco*) — On behalf of the Moroccan Labour Union (UMT), Brother Mahjoub-Benseddik, I would like to echo previous speakers and congratulate the President on her election and, indeed, wish her all success in guiding the work of this 89th Session.

I would also like to congratulate the Director-General of the Organization for the remarkable Report he submitted for discussion. I think it is a document which presents only too rare qualities and they should be welcomed. It is drafted in a very lively, alert and engaged fashion. It takes stock lucidly of the work situation and the situation of workers worldwide. It proposes a very focused programme meeting the needs of workers and I think this is something that the ILO needs to achieve. It needs to take its rightful place in the multilateral United Nations system in the constantly expanding international movement towards a fairer and more human globalization.

The ILO's role was a pioneering role and I think it is still irreplaceable for placing freedom, equity, safety and dignity on a universal footing as cardinal values of decent work, as aims for individuals and States and as an integrated global approach which will rise to the challenges of our time.

I think we can welcome the realism and the great humility of the Director-General when he says on page 15 that we need to *inject much-needed adrenalin into the bureaucratic arteries of our 80-year-old institution*. Perhaps the metaphor is a bit severe but I think it is judicious. It conveys a true engagement, a healthy engagement.

Allow me just to work a little bit on this metaphor. The arteries of the ILO, I think, were designed 80 years ago to try to inject some life blood of democratic freedoms and, indeed, union freedom. I think the Report of the Director-General spells out on page 71 that freedom of association is *a cornerstone* of the ILO's identity. It is the cornerstone of decent work. It is a condition of tripartism and needs to be one of the priority programmes of the ILO.

Unfortunately, too many workers are barred from associating freely and are quite powerless to get their protests and complaints across to the Committee on Freedom of Association. Too many union organiza-

tions, and indeed union people themselves, are persecuted, discriminated against, banned, brutalized, without the ILO being able to act. Too many of the decisions of the Committee on Freedom of Association remain a dead letter scorned by governments and doing no favours for workers. My organization UMT has, in fact, a year ago had to buy pages of advertising space in newspapers to publish the entire wording of a decision by the ILO Credentials Committee which a Minister had deliberately tried to deny and distort as he felt that it was contrary to his policy of discrimination and hostility to free unions. Union freedom therefore means that the ILO needs to keep very close to its mandate and be in step with the demands of our time. This freedom means that control mechanisms need to be stepped up and made effective in order to ensure the visibility and moral authority of the ILO.

My second comment concerns the programmes in the Director-General's Report. We wholeheartedly agree with its objectives. The ILO needs to be focused on labour issues, dynamic in drawing up standards, open to its environment, maintain the track record it has had in the past and be on the ball concerning the many technical issues arising from social protection and sectoral problems. The ILO must be active in the support it gives to governments, employers and workers. Let us not forget, and I don't mince my words here, that the ILO is no longer just a technical agency responsible for implementing so-called co-operation programmes designed and implemented solely by donors with scant regard for concrete situations and fundamental freedoms, freedom and independence of association in particular. The ILO must verify and ensure that its constituents put into practice what they say about reinforcing and respecting their mandate.

Nothing, of course, can replace the participation of workers in drawing up programmes even if they belong to a poor country. A free union cannot be reduced to being simply a roll of end-user programmes designed by others, without their participation and unrelated to their needs. The ILO cooperation entails taking stock lucidly and perhaps reorientating its work, re-centred on workers' demands and employers' demands, concrete areas of work tying in with the interests of these players who are the main agents of tripartism.

With a view to decent work and solidarity which underpins our community of interest and aims, you can certainly rely on Moroccan workers and their continued commitment. We want an active, dynamic ILO which draws its strengths from and defends its founding principles, and comes closer to its Members by being efficient and pertinent in its interventions.

(The Conference adjourned at 1.15 p.m.)