

**Thirteenth sitting**

Saturday, 11 June 2005, 10.10 a.m.

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

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT

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

Original Portuguese: Mr. FANHEIRO (Worker, Mozambique)

Allow me, on behalf of the Mozambique Workers' Organization (OTM-CS), to extend the fraternal greetings to the President, the two Vice-Presidents and to all the distinguished delegates and guests attending this august International Labour Conference.

I would like to congratulate the Director-General of the ILO for the excellent Report he submitted for discussion by the representatives of the Governments, workers' and employers' organizations.

The Report itself testifies to the importance of the topics on the agenda of this Conference, particularly with regard to the assessment of the implementation of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, the promotional framework for occupational safety and health, and work in the fishing sector and the promotion of youth employment.

We commend the ILO for the resolve it has shown in its work to establish standards which contribute to sound, healthy, working relations in all member States, within a context of respect for the fundamental rights of workers.

As part of the strategic plan adopted by the Fourth Congress, the OTM-CS, has given pride of place to the effective implementation of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, as a way of improving the working and living conditions of the workers.

The ratification of the Social Charter of Fundamental Social Rights by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) member States, which was drawn up by the social partners working within a tripartite framework, shows that it is possible to establish partnerships in order to combine efforts to achieve economic and social development whilst upholding fundamental, social and trade union rights in Southern Africa.

The Republic of Mozambique has already ratified the core ILO Conventions. However, the OTM-CS considers that the ratification of international labour Conventions is not an end in itself; what really matters is their implementation, monitoring and evalua-

tion by the social partners and civil society, in a spirit of social dialogue.

Our country, Mozambique, is bathed by the Indian Ocean and has a coastline that stretches for over 3,000 kilometres. Hence, the fishing sector is vital in promoting economic growth and employment and in combating absolute poverty which affects our country.

Therefore, we commend the initiative of discussing the workers' situation in the fishing sector and the promotion of employment, decent work and opportunities for youth as a means of achieving the objectives of absolute poverty eradication, economic development and stable working relationships.

On behalf of the OTM-CS, I would like to express our gratitude to the ILO for the support given to us through ACTRAV and the Subregional Offices based in Harare, Zimbabwe and Pretoria. This assistance has enabled us to organize many activities linked to fighting the worst forms of child labour and the HIV/AIDS pandemic and to strengthening trade union research and intervention capability.

We are convinced that this support will continue to take account of the complex challenges imposed by globalization and by the social and labour impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic that affect the world of work, particularly the Southern African.

Mr. ZORIGTBAATAR (Employer, Mongolia)

I am truly delighted to participate in the 93rd Session of the International Labour Conference. First of all, I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak at this session of the Conference.

The Employers' delegation of Mongolia has carefully studied the documents, which were provided for consideration and discussion of this 93rd Session of the International Labour Conference.

It is a well known fact that the touchstone of economy and development of any country is the issue of employment. In the case of Mongolia, employment of young people is the major challenge which we should resolve.

Unemployment has particularly affected young people. We live in a country where more than 20,000 young people are unemployed.

There are a number of problems which young people face while searching for jobs such as the inability to find jobs according to their professions. They are not hired due to lack of working experience. They do not have sufficient professional skills. Also, lack of jobs, a low salary and lack of

connections are other reasons for failure to gain employment.

The sectors, where the employment of the young people of Mongolia is prevailing are agriculture, manufacturing, banking and finance, construction and education. On the other hand, due to the fact that value of labour is low, a number of young people are interested in migrating.

Moreover, we consider that by expanding and improving our business and commercial relations with employers, we will be able to create conditions for small and medium businesses, to form a private sector and to create decent work for youth.

There are many ways of establishing relations between young entrepreneurs, so that they can exchange their ideas and experiences by the development of trade strategies, the provision of microcredits for young people, the implementation of a nationwide programme to open up opportunities for young people to conduct private business, the conducting of professional and farming training, the organization of national and international congresses of young entrepreneurs and the establishment of a unified network.

We consider that there are ways of organizing this activity with the support of the International Labour Organization and governmental agencies by maintaining a unified network to accept requests for human resources and jobs.

To conclude, whether a young person's background is poor or prosperous, one thing does not change. There is potential to fulfil and a life to be made rewarding. By our efforts here we can and must help.

We believe that by combining our efforts, we will be able to produce a programme which will improve employment issues for young people throughout the world.

Original Azerbaijani: Mr. MOHBALIYEV (Worker, Azerbaijan)

While the processes of globalization and rapid technological change create new opportunities for people in terms of employment and benefits, they also decrease the social protection of young people during this transition period. Low levels of security, non-payment of wages and the essence of a social perspective at the workplace are features of young persons' lives. The problem of youth employment in Azerbaijan remains acute. Half of the young people between 16 and 35 years old, which make up 35 per cent of the population, are affected by this. According to sociological research, 70 per cent of the unemployment in our Republic affects youth.

Armenia's aggression against our country has certainly had a negative impact in this regard since, as a result, Azerbaijan was deprived of 20 per cent of its territory and of 300,000 workplaces. In order to solve this serious problem, 600,000 workplaces were to be created by a Presidential Decree, as stipulated in the law on youth policy; 217,000 such posts have been created to date.

We, as the social partners of the Government and employers, are concerned about the problem of youth employment. Youth is a social group that has great difficulty finding jobs today. Young people in Azerbaijan lack a competitive edge that would enable them to enter into the labour market due to: their lack of professional experience, qualifications and skills; instability of their jobs, because they may be dismissed, called up for military services or have to leave for educational reasons, etc.; the fail-

ure of employers to provide extra concessions to youth; and the indifference of young people themselves because they have been used to depending on their parents and the State.

We draw this conclusion, because two-thirds of all vacancies remain without takers.

Experience shows that most of our young people prefer to obtain degrees in humanities and social sciences, while industry requires managers, engineers and technicians. Some 50 per cent of job-seekers have studied humanities, for which there is less demand. This situation clearly results from a lack of career guidance; the closing down of vocational training establishment, and employers' reluctance to invest in the training of managers.

It is not by accident that foreign companies import labour from developed countries, which has a negative effect on employment in Azerbaijan.

Unemployed youth have less possibility to benefit from development. This in turn, has a negative impact on production, as well as on future generations of our country. We must, therefore, promote further studies and vocational training. We must create an environment conducive to establishing businesses; this will create workplaces for youth. We must provide assistance to youth during the transition period of the economy. We must provide comprehensive information on employment opportunities.

In order to improve the education system and vocational training, we must design curricula that take account of labour market requirements; provide for the training of executives; improve existing qualifications; and introduce new career paths.

Efficient programmes supporting the employment of young men and women must be developed at the earliest possible opportunity and efforts should be joined at the national and international levels for this purpose. Without this, it will not be possible to decrease poverty, increase employment and establish permanent peace.

Achieving those goals will be for the benefit of all parties concerned, including Government, trade union organizations and employers' representatives.

Original French: Mr. KEIRA (Government, Guinea)

The Governing Body and the Director-General have again proved their efficiency and ability in presenting us with Reports which are real sources of inspiration for the achievement of lasting universal peace based on social justice, freedom and collective well-being. The issues raised are a real concern of, nay a challenge to all countries, particularly developing countries, which have to find resources for fresh growth, adopt a realistic macroeconomic policy and join the trend of economic globalization.

On behalf of the Guinean delegation, I should like to comment on the issues on the agenda of this session of our Conference.

With regard to occupational health and safety, at the 90th and 91st Sessions of the International Labour Conference, my country stated its position on the relevance of this issue and would therefore like to invite this august assembly to support this standard-setting activity of the ILO which would bring about a considerable improvement of workers' living and working conditions. This is why my delegation endorses the conclusions and recommendations of the Report presented by the Office.

Hence, the Republic of Guinea, in accordance with articles 15 and 18 of its Basic Law, and articles 168 and 205 of its Labour Code, is striving to regu-

larly update, the texts of the relevant laws and regulations.

As for the question of work in the fishing sector, my delegation is pleased that this issue has once again been included on the agenda of this present session for a second discussion with a view to adopting a new instrument guaranteeing the rights of workers in this sector. Small-scale and industrial fisheries are important for the economy of Guinea, which is a coastal country with many rivers.

With regard to youth employment and the curbing of unemployment, the Guinean Government has given priority to the new poverty reduction strategy and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. As far as we are concerned, any employment-promotion strategy should be carried out within the framework of good governance, in terms of organization, law and socio-economic management, to wit the participation of citizens through their representatives in the process of employment promotion, a reliable legal system, the efficient management of public services and cooperation with States and, international organizations, because the employment crisis cannot be solved in isolation without an employment policy based on strategic priorities, basic guidelines and specific programmes for productive job creation resulting from joint action by all the social partners.

The Republic of Guinea, as a Member of the ILO since its independence and having ratified the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122), has made this thorny issue an essential element of its poverty reduction strategy. In this regard, my country applauds the support of past partners, such as the UNDP and the ILO, whose assistance has permitted the preparation of a national policy framework document on the promotion of employment for development and the fight against poverty.

However, regardless of the relevance of the different approaches, the most important issue is their operationalization. In order to do this, my country, which is still marked by the lengthy presence of thousands of refugees on its territory following various conflicts in neighbouring countries, trusts that it will receive further support from the ILO and the international community.

Allow me to comment on the Director-General's Report which this year focuses on developments in the world of work. Indeed, the world of work is now undergoing radical change owing to the restructuring of services and public enterprises. More than ever, it is necessary for states to contemplate measures and policies suited to the new international situation characterized by globalization. This adaptation should incorporate the promotion of youth employment in view of the growing numbers of this fringe of the population on the labour market.

The Guinean Government is therefore committed to building a liberal economy which brings hope for all. This determination is backed by the active participation of economic players whose dynamism should make it possible to create many decent jobs, mainly for young people.

I could not end without reiterating the support of my country, the Republic of Guinea, for all the efforts of the International Labour Office to establish peace, promote social justice and combat all forms of inequality. My country will continue to support these actions through initiatives shared with all social partners in keeping with the ideals of the International Labour Organization.

Mr. ZINCK (*Government, Fiji*)

It is a great honour for me to address this 93rd Session of the International Labour Conference.

The Fiji delegation to this Conference is the most representative in the sense that the Government has included all the social partners in the delegation as delegates and advisers. The Government has done that for two reasons: first, the need to clarify with the ILO the question of representation of workers' and employers' organizations to the International Labour Conference; second, to nurture the duty of good faith with the social partners before the implementation of the Employment Relations Bill.

The Employment Relations Bill promotes the effective operation of the duty of good faith in all aspects of the individual and collective relationships between employers, workers and unions, by codifying relevant case laws, clarifying the nature of the duty, and providing for penalties for certain breaches of the duty.

The Employment Relations Bill is currently before Cabinet and, contrary to what the Worker claims, the Bill will be tabled in Parliament, and it is envisaged that the Bill will be enacted at the beginning of 2006.

Allow me to take this opportunity to thank the ILO for the assistance given to my Ministry in the preparation of the Bill.

The Fiji delegation commends the Governing Body of the ILO for identifying the elimination of forced and compulsory labour to be the subject of the Global Report at this session of the Conference.

My country has ratified both Conventions, and we have amended our laws and practices to ensure full compliance. This will not make us complacent and my Ministry will be ever-vigilant over the emergence of forced or compulsory labour in any form.

My country sees the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), and the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105), as the primary focus for the entitlements to fair labour practices for all persons, and disallows discrimination in employment, which is consistent with our Constitution Amendment Act of 1997.

The Fiji delegation wishes to congratulate the ILO upon putting together a promotional framework in the area of occupational safety and health. Pursuant to the conclusions reached at the 91st Session of the Conference in 2003, we welcome the discussions at this session of the Conference, and we look forward to the adoption of a Convention.

We in Fiji recognize the existence of dangerous substances, including toxic chemicals. In that regard, the Ministry of Labour has started networking with other key agencies to oversee the movement of these chemicals and substances through our seaways.

As a maritime nation, the Government of the Republic of the Fiji Islands welcomes the second discussion on work in the fishing sector, and it looks forward to the adoption of the Convention, supplemented by a Recommendation. Those who are engaged on local fishing boats are covered by the Occupational Health and Safety at Work Act, 1996, and we need to have that applied also to our people engaged on foreign-owned vessels and boats by the proposed Convention and Recommendation, to ensure uniform coverage and protection.

My delegation would like to thank the ILO for the preparation of the comprehensive Report, *Youth:*

Pathways to decent work. It will be a good basis for the discussion of the subject in this session of the Conference and we look forward to the strategies and tools which might be developed and applied in the ILO's future work on youth employment.

To conclude, allow me briefly to comment on the process of globalization. Like other small economies in the world, my country does not have its fair share of the results. We seek a process which is fair, and which gives all women and men the rights, opportunities and capabilities that they need to exercise their own choices for a decent life. We in Fiji seek globalization with a social dimension, which sustains human values and enhances the well-being of people in terms of their freedom, prosperity and security.

At this point, I would like to congratulate Mr. Tony Blair, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, for his initiative and efforts to bring the G8 countries to write-off the debts of developing countries in Africa. Such bold initiatives, including the giving of interest-free loans, are the positive points of globalization which my Government and developing countries welcome. Too often, small economies like ours are forgotten by the "big boys". I call on the ILO to support any effort such as this initiative taken by Tony Blair to bring much-needed relief to all our people. The realization of this will help our economy and create political stability.

To this end, the Government is putting through Parliament the Reconciliation, Tolerance and Unity Bill, which has been introduced as the solution and the way forward for our domestic political problems. It will ensure lasting peace and prosperity for our people.

There may be vocal opponents like the Fiji Trades Union Congress who may seek your assistance. As always, our good intentions are always misconstrued by these troublemakers.

Let me assure you, this august body, that the Bill is ILO-compliant and does not breach any of the recognized law and practices on unity and reconciliation.

It is, therefore, in that regard that the ILO should appreciate the situation in Fiji and the efforts made by the Government to ensure political stability and promote decent work.

Original Armenian: Mr. YESAYAN (Government, Armenia)

It is a great honour for me to speak here at the 93rd Session of the International Labour Conference.

In the desert, man feels fear – fear of empty spaces, fear of running out of water, fear of getting lost. Mirages that appear on the horizon also inspire fear. Some of them are so real and colourful that they can mislead even the most experienced traveller, but illusions in the desert mean certain death. The ILO, which is at the forefront of the United Nations agencies, has confirmed once again that the Conventions adopted decades ago remain largely relevant today and are our guide in our quest for the right path.

Globalization, which is accompanied by increasing interdependence and closer links between national economies, expansion of the boundaries of markets and systems of distribution, as well as the movement of capital, labour and technologies, opens up new opportunities for millions of people worldwide. The focus is now on individual initiative, market incentives and competition, as the

forces commanding most of the available resources, with the potential to increase the pace of growth and improve the standard of living.

However, the process of globalization is multifaceted and also has its down-side: the effects of globalization may lead to long-term imbalances which in turn can give rise to social problems. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that the public good is accorded higher priority than economic advantage or national interests.

Armenia's adaptation to the processes of global integration is regarded by our Government as a precondition for its economic growth, sustainable development, and the improvement of the standard of living. In pursuing its policy of integrating in the world trade system, Armenia became a Member of the World Trade Organization in 2003.

Armenia has already achieved some success in implementing its radical reforms. Over the past three years the economy of the country has grown steadily, on average, by 12 per cent. Armenia participates actively in the programmes of regional economic cooperation, within the framework of the European Union and other regional initiatives.

In 2003, the Government of Armenia adopted a poverty reduction paper which takes account of the Millennium Development Goals and focuses on the reform of social and labour relations.

In 2004, the Government, through its Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, together with the Union of Employers and Entrepreneurs, the Confederation of Trade Unions of Armenia and the ILO, signed a programme for technical cooperation for the period 2004-06. The programme lays down the main orientations of social dialogue among us, as well as the obligation for the Union of Employers and Entrepreneurs to engage in social responsibility and cooperate with the Government in overcoming poverty.

A new Labour Code was adopted in 2004. During the drafting of this code, not only were the core Conventions of the ILO taken into account, but also the provisions of the European Social Charter. At the same time, an Act on labour inspection was adopted, and a Bill on employment is currently before the National Assembly. Intensive work is now under way to draft implementing regulations.

Thanks to these steps, we can say that substantial progress has been achieved on the legislative front. We greatly appreciate the work done by ILO experts in evaluating our labour legislation, but in order to complete the task we will need further technical assistance from the ILO, and we trust that you will help us in this regard.

At the same time we are carrying out a reform of the system of vocational training in accordance with the demand on the labour market. We hope that in the near future we will have created the necessary conditions to ensure sustainable progress and development in our country, as well as the autonomy of our youth. Armenia is making an effort to build a steadily developing and cohesive society as a means of guaranteeing peace and well-being in the region.

I would like to thank the President and the secretariat of the Conference for their excellent organization of this session. I hope the recommendations adopted here will be of the same high quality as this event. I would like to conclude by quoting Georg Lichtenberg. "If my mouth ever wished to eat more than my head and hands deserved, I would shut it for ever."

First of all, on behalf of Argentinean workers, I would like to congratulate the Director-General for his Report assessing the work carried out by ILO. I would also like to thank the Chair of the Governing Body and all the delegates. We are very pleased to be participating in this 93rd Session of the International Labour Conference, where tripartism proves that it is a pillar of the discussions and becomes a platform for Conventions and Recommendations.

The Report of the Director-General provides food for thought, encouraging member States, employers and workers to go on to consolidate progress and continue moving forwards, participating more proactively in the work that is carried out.

I would like to highlight the results of the Director-General's assessment of the situation in an effort to continuously improve the way in which we operate in accordance with current needs. The search for the best use of time and technology during the Conference speaks volumes about the dynamism with which he intends to inject the ILO. We firmly support the global alliance to end forced labour.

We agree with the ILO that the world of work is something dynamic, which means that we need to take time to think about the future with our feet firmly on the ground; this is a proposal which fills us with hope.

We firmly support the decision that the framework of policies and strategies for the programme should continue to be based on the four pillars of decent work: the fundamental principles and rights at work, employment, social dialogue and tripartism.

The discussion topics at this session of the Conference, such as job security and fishing, are extremely important for workers and it is our wish that the two new Conventions be approved.

Promoting youth employment should be a priority in national employment policies. In Argentina, we are directing activities to re-establish work culture based on tripartite social dialogue. The CGT in Argentina not only supports the national democratic process, but also, through its use of actions and words, promotes active policies by the Government and the Parliament to create jobs for the unemployed and improve the quality of existing jobs. I must emphasize that new jobs need to be created for the millions of unemployed workers who would like to recover the dignity of being able to work and solutions need to be found for the most needy.

A priority on the agenda of the Argentinean trade union movement is rebuilding the fabric of industry and social solidarity; we are convinced that achieving social justice is fundamental if we are to guarantee peace.

We believe that in our country, in light of our experiences, using budgetary allocations for salaries, infrastructure and public works cannot be seen as expenditure, but rather as investment.

We believe that it is the State, more than anybody else, who should guarantee that the economy is at the service of the people and social well-being. From our point of view, from the experience of the bad examples of neo-liberal approaches which had terrible consequences for our society, and now, arising from the ashes through a culture of work, we can say to all the delegates from around the world gathered here today, that there is no nation without a state. It is the state that should guarantee the

common good and law and order. The state cannot and should not neglect its fundamental role.

As Argentina moves on in the process of reactivation, having survived the worst, we need to ensure a fairer distribution of wealth; the gap between the rich and poor is still very wide: we still have some unfinished business on this matter. We think it is essential for wages to be equalized upwards and not downwards.

The National Employment Council has taken its first steps, with progress regarding productivity, an essential and flexible minimum wage – a clear example of tripartite dialogue.

The trade union movement is pushing for the approval of a new law on occupational accidents and diseases in order to banish the idea that work is associated with death and to create a real culture of prevention. We need strong enterprises with investments geared towards production and committed to the country, enterprises run by people with a sense of social responsibility in the face of the serious problems we face, such as poverty, marginalization, unemployment and low wages. This is why we are demanding that, through the use of collective bargaining, employers facilitate discussion on wages, the fulfilment of labour standards, the employment of registered workers and participate in the network of efforts to help those affected by unemployment.

We at the CGT in Argentina, believe that policies to establish decent work need to be improved, as promoted and recommended by the ILO.

Mr. SORIANO (Employer, Philippines)

On behalf of Filipino employers, we would like to commend the Director-General for his informative Report, *Consolidating progress and moving ahead*. His Report gives us a global picture of the evolving dynamics of the ILO Strategic Policy Framework on decent work.

As lucidly pointed out by the said Report, however, although varying degrees of progress implementing the strategic framework were made, collective reflection is needed to assess and address the rapidly changing patterns of work and production. These patterns pose organizational and policy challenges of shaping the strategic framework to the changing priorities of government and labour and employer organizations. We agree that addressing these challenges through international tripartite action would be critical in determining both the direction of development strategy at national and global level and the role of the ILO and the multilateral system in the years to come.

In this connection, we applaud the Director-General in priming his Office and all its resources for the identification of these challenges as well as the proper response to them.

I am pleased to report that in my country, the Philippines, we are undertaking the same process of review and consolidation of the first National Action Plan for Decent Work which we launched with ILO assistance in May 2002. Of particular importance is the fact that this Action Plan was the result of a tripartite initiative, with the employers represented by my organization, the Employers' Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP). To sustain implementation and monitoring of the Action Plan, the tripartite partners established a high-level Decent Work National Tripartite Advisory Committee.

From the launch of the first National Action Plan for Decent Work up to the present, the Advisory Committee has dispensed advice and validated the achievements of the Action Plan. Of note are the successful analysis of decent work deficits in the Philippines and the refinement of programme responses. These deficits in decent work which affect labour standards, employment, social protection and social dialogue were recognized in the National Action Plan. They continue to challenge government, employers and workers to identify their priorities and their common agenda for action. In fact, the status of decent work as a guiding principle for employment goals was established when the President herself referred to decent work as the basis for placing employment at the top of the development agenda. This agenda was reflected in the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan for 2001-04, which included a chapter on promoting full, decent and productive employment.

In February of this year, our Secretary of Labor and Employment convened the highest Philippine advisory body on labour matters, the Tripartite Industrial Peace Council, to discuss and adopt the second Philippine National Action Plan for Decent Work for the period 2005-07. As adopted by the TIPC, the Action Plan provides a framework for activities which combine sectoral and integrated responses. Included in the sectoral responses are ILO commitments that support the initiatives of national constituents to reduce decent work deficits, as found in the ILO's four strategic objectives. But the most important component of the Plan is a common and integrated agenda for the most serious deficit, chronic unemployment and the economy's inability to create jobs for a burgeoning labour force. This agenda coincides with the Philippine Medium-Term Development Plan for 2005-10, which emphasizes the pursuit of labour policies that provide decent and productive employment for workers.

We are heartened by the fact that the aggressive pursuit of a Decent Work Agenda has served as a unifying force among the social partners. It cannot be denied that, without the environment provided by our democratic institutions and constitutional protection for labour, all tripartite initiatives on decent work would not have prospered.

Finally, I am pleased to say that ECOP, an organization which actively supports the implementation of the National Action Plan for Decent Work and of which I am a member, has spared no effort and resources to address the Philippines major decent work deficit, which is unemployment. For this, we have employed a three-pronged strategy: first, mobilizing the private sector to undertake initiatives for the creation and preservation of jobs; second, facilitating the creation of a sound business environment; and third, cooperating with the Government in strengthening public and corporate governance.

We hope that the success of ECOP and its social partners in the promotion of decent work in the Philippines, however modest, can attest to the viability of the strategic objectives on decent work in this era of relentless globalization.

Original Arabic: Mr. DJEMAM (representative, International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions)

I would like to thank and congratulate the Director-General for his introduction to the International

Labour Conference: *Consolidating progress and moving ahead.*

We all need to work together. There has to be an international covenant to combat this inhumane practice, whose victims are hundreds and thousands of workers, both women and men, throughout the world.

The negative effects of globalization have increased the imbalance in the labour market, particularly amongst young people, who are compelled to accept work which is often humiliating and not very productive and, in fact, not decent. We have to try to consolidate the four pillars of decent work: fundamental principles and rights at work, social protection, social dialogue, tripartism and decent work for women and men.

I would like to thank President Bouteflika, who, in his speech, mentioned four ILO Conventions ratified by Algeria that will have a positive impact on Arab workers. I would also like to refer to the positive initiatives which have been carried out in Arab countries – that is the creation of Arab trade unions – and we hope that this will be done in the very near future.

The Director-General dealt with the question of Arab workers in occupied Arab territories and in Palestinian territories, and mentioned the ill-treatment by the occupying Israeli authorities of Palestinian workers. This situation is being perpetuated by policies of discrimination, destruction and demolitions exiling worker and confiscating their land, and it is these policies which make Palestinians flee.

The situation is the same in the Syrian Golan Heights and the Lebanese territories, where we are witnessing an ongoing violation of human rights and the rights of workers.

We have to put an end to these inhumane practices. We have to provide the necessary assistance to all these peoples, particularly in Palestine, in order to confront this unjust occupation. We must attempt to apply the resolutions of the international legitimacy, and attempt to guarantee the self-determination of Palestinians in their own country with their capital, Al-Quds. We believe that the withdrawal of the American-occupying forces in Iraq should be ensured to allow the Iraqi people to exercise their self-determination. The Americans must stop intervening in the domestic affairs of other countries and must put an end to their interference in Sudan.

We require an additional effort on the part of the Arab Labour Organization, and we invite you also, to promote the use of the Arab language in the International Labour Organization. This has to be done at all levels in the International Labour Organization, particularly for the different jobs offered by this Organization.

I would like to thank the Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV). We would like to welcome the good relations that exist between our movement and the International Labour Organization. We hope this cooperation will continue in the future.

Original Armenian: Mr. TARVERDYAN (Employer, Armenia)

First and foremost, allow me – on behalf of the Union of Manufacturers and Businessmen of Armenia – to greet you and thank you for giving me the floor.

Armenia's transformation into a State with a market economy and its integration into the world

economy began in 1991, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, when Armenia became a member of many international organizations and the emergence of a private sector in Armenia began.

The Union of Manufacturers and Businessmen of Armenia was established at its founding congress on 23 March 1996; it actively participates in improving and liberalizing national legislation and establishing mutually beneficial links between national and foreign companies, both within the country and outside its borders.

History has shown that an effective national strategy for sustainable development requires the combined efforts and abilities of the State, trade unions, and the private sector focused on common goals. This, in turn, requires democratic institutions and integration mechanisms that are capable of bringing together all the participants in the process to work on shared development goals in order to elaborate long-term programmes for resolving the problems of globalization without harming the interests of future generations.

In the Technical Cooperation Programme with the ILO, the tripartite social partners of the Republic of Armenia, recognizing the opportunities granted by the ILO Decent Work Programme as a strategic tool for poverty alleviation in a global economy and taking into account the recommendations made in the report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, *A fair globalization: Creating opportunities for all*, expressed their full support for the concept of decent work as a factor in productivity. The social partners of the Republic of Armenia have turned to the ILO with a request for technical assistance in developing and implementing the Decent Work Agenda. We must point out that all the social partners of Armenia unanimously agree that in this phase of globalization, in addition to the efforts of the Government, corporate social responsibility acquires particular importance. In this context, the private sector must not be content to reap the benefits of globalization but must bear social responsibility, which is defined in terms of regular tripartite dialogue on an equal level with governments and trade unions.

In this connection, considerable efforts will be needed in order to create favourable conditions for business, so that Armenian manufacturers can successfully develop their business. If they are to achieve this, they will need assistance of various kinds, not just in order to facilitate a painless transition to the new competitive environment of globalization, but also to allow them to become more efficient and to provide them with the necessary technological and managerial experience. This will necessitate the establishment of a number of institutions and the introduction of measures to increase this potential, including measures to develop social partnership and social dialogue, and to improve the quality of labour market information.

In the conditions of a rapidly changing world economy, factors such as efficiency, differentiation, flexibility, quality and innovation are more important than ever.

Armenia's success at integrating into the world trade system will depend on its ability to steadily increase the competitiveness of Armenian business; this in turn will require macroeconomic stability, policies focused on developing international cooperation, a high level of investment, active efforts in

the area of technology, and investment in vocational training and physical infrastructure.

In order to achieve a significant improvement in productivity in Armenia, we will have to modernize our businesses, and restructure and rationalize inefficient businesses; we will also have to improve profitability, diversify production, improve cooperation between the various links in the production chain, and develop distribution networks.

We must however acknowledge that, due to our current difficulties with social development, this will be no easy task. If we are to succeed, we will have to be organized and unite our efforts.

Many countries have been successful, thanks to the effective use of world trade and investment flows. We sincerely hope that the renewal of cooperation between Armenia and the ILO will allow Armenia to apply the latest international expertise in business development, and will allow us to become equal partners in the process of global governance.

Mr. FARAH (*Government, Somalia*)

First, I should like to say that it is my pleasure, and that of the people of Somalia, to be with you here today.

The civil strife and instability in the country for the last 14 years has destroyed our country's basic infrastructure.

The Transitional Federal Government of my country was formed in Nairobi, Kenya, in January 2005 after more than two years of negotiations. Our Government is committed to rebuilding the country's shattered infrastructures. We are determined to come back to the fold of the international community.

Without forgetting the role that the international community has played during the negotiations and the eventful formation of the Transitional Federal Government, and in the context of the International Labour Organization, we will require your invaluable assistance in the following areas which are critical to my Ministry, among others: re-establishing all the institutions of public administration; re-enacting labour administration governing the private sector for new Somalia; re-enacting public sector administration management and public planning; re-enacting vocational training institutions for new Somalia; re-establishing training institutions for the public sector; and creating employment and eliminating child labour which has reached unprecedented levels due to the long period of civil strife.

The discussions on occupational health and safety, promotion of youth employment and work in the fishing sector all concern the development of workers in the world and new Somalia in particular.

The tasks ahead of my nascent Government, and my Ministry in particular, are enormous, and without your cooperation, we can make very insignificant achievements.

I stand before you here today with no doubt in my mind that you will play a role in establishing a just, transparent, effective and responsive Government of the people of Somalia.

Ms. LANARA-TZOTZE (*Worker, Greece*)

We also congratulate the Director-General on his Introduction to this session of the Conference entitled *Consolidating progress and moving ahead*, a concise and timely overview of the issues and the

challenges facing the world of work and the ILO. At a time of major global change, the Introduction as well as the Reports brought before this session of the Conference aptly assess the problems and indicate ways to act with a view to making decent work for men and women a global goal based on the ILO's four strategic objectives. They also provide food for thought. Indeed, the moment is appropriate for active reflection. Against the backdrop of complex processes related to globalization, we live at a time when globally generated wealth, technological progress and innovation have no historic precedent. Yet, half a century after the end of the Second World War, we also witness accelerating violence and conflict, expanding poverty, deepening inequality, and exploitation in its most abhorrent forms. In this respect, the painstaking persistent work of the ILO on forced labour, as outlined before this session of the Conference in the sixth Global Report, *A global alliance against forced labour*, provides a shocking detailed insight into the dark world of evil. Inconceivably it seems in our modern world, there are 12.3 million victims of forced labour, 56 per cent of whom are women and girls, children representing 40-50 per cent of all victims. Trafficking alone is a profitable 32 billion dollar global business. It is time to act. We cannot but join and we also urge all parties concerned to join the multi-stakeholder Global Alliance to eradicate this scourge from our modern societies.

We also welcome the accent placed anew in the Director-General's Report on a strong gender perspective as an integral part of the ILO's mandate to articulate the synergies which bring full employment, social cohesion and poverty reduction. Women's increased participation in employment is over 70 per cent in developed and 60 per cent in developing countries. However, women still face discrimination at work and at home. Their work is more commonly unpaid than men's; often it is not considered as work at all and is therefore invisible. Women overpopulate precarious jobs and unemployment statistics. Poverty worldwide has a gender and its gender is female. In this respect, we would strongly advocate the prospect of having gender equality in the world of work placed on the agenda of the 95th Session of the International Labour Conference in 2007. Today, 61 years after the Declaration of Philadelphia, the principles, the values and the work of the ILO not only retain their legitimacy but also take on a new urgency. The prevailing neo-liberal model of globalization, based as it is on aggressive competition, has failed to deliver prosperity, fairness, stability and regionally balanced sustainable development. Industrial restructuring and the changing patterns of employment are accompanied by deteriorating terms and conditions of work. Fundamental rights of workers are disputed, violated and reversed as many of the cases examined also in the framework of this session of the Conference show. Unemployment, affecting particularly women and young people, is a distressing issue in our societies. In this context, the upcoming assessment of the progress achieved towards the Millennium Declaration Goals at the United Nations September Summit should also serve as a test of policy choices and objectives, and as a test for political will and active commitment.

At a time when the centre of gravity in world affairs is being increasingly shifted away from national and regional bodies to international organiza-

tions, concern is expressed around the evolution of a system of policy-making by international bodies that are not really democratically accountable to any constituency, a system which potentially can impose its own agenda on lesser economies, smaller countries and the world of work. In this respect too, the ILO with the representativity and the tripartism inherent in its unique structure has a critical role to play and should therefore have the resources, the means and the budget needed, to carry out its vital work effectively.

The work of the ILO is empowered by a set of irreplaceable fundamental values. In today's world, dominated by the market ideology, by a culture of strident economic individualism which sees the price of everything but cannot see the value of anything, the values of decent work – decent work for women and men at a global level – remain very much relevant and they deserve our widest possible support.

Original Arabic: Mr. ABDO (Employer, Egypt)

My thanks go to the Director-General for giving us this opportunity to examine the outcome of debates on previous Reports in the hope that this will facilitate the implementation of the Organization's programmes of work and the expansion of its working methods.

We are looking forward to the implementation of programmes and applicable strategies that will coincide with the goals agreed by the Organization, on the one hand, and the disparate circumstances of member States on the other, especially given the new challenges which face the world today: ferociously competitive markets and, fears arising from the rapid changes within a world of ever advancing and developing sophisticated technologies.

We live in a world that is characterized by rapid metamorphoses in the world of work, which raise many, political, technological and organizational challenges for governments, and employers' and workers' organizations. The coming period will be definitive in shaping the role of the Organization and multilateralism for the next decade.

Recent years have witnessed the launch of a number of global initiatives on decent work and employment, the last of which is the Youth Employment Network. Although the goals of this initiative are noble, and complement each other, they need more dynamism to activate tripartism and contribute to strengthening workers' and the employers' organizations. The Organization can organize effective campaigns to make the objective of decent work for all a guiding light for environmental, social and economic development strategies at national level. Similar effort should also be made at the level of multilateralism in order for the importance of decent work to be recognized in the context of development programmes, as well as its role to poverty reduction and in the achievement of a fair globalization for all. Those are the objectives emphasized in the Millennium Declaration.

Our Federation would like to express its appreciation for the initiative of the world network for the employment of youth as a means to reach the objective of decent work. Young people are indeed, the engine of the economy and have an enormously significant level of purchasing power. That is why the question of the youth has been the central item on the agenda of this Conference.

In accordance with the resolution on the implications of Israeli settlements in Palestine and other the occupied Arab territories on the situation of the Arab workers, adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 66th Session (1980), the Director-General has sent another mission to evaluate the situation of workers in Israel and the occupied Arab territories. Its Report is before you.

We wonder how international initiatives on decent work and the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work can be respected so long as such practices exist, practices including ongoing curbs on the free movement of workers, the pursuit of the Israeli policies of demolishing homes and building the separation wall in flagrant violation of international law, the continuous expansion of settlements at the expense of Arab land and attempts to erase the Arab and Islamic identity of Al-Quds and the occupied Golan territories. It is therefore up to all of us, governments, workers and employers to demand an end to these barbaric practices if we aspire a society with decent work.

Mr. ALEMAYEHU (*Worker, Ethiopia*)

I should like to thank the Chairperson of the Governing Body and the Director-General for their excellent Reports which make decent work a global goal.

The fact that the Strategic Policy Framework for the programmes continues to be built on the four pillars of decent work is an indication of the ILO's commitment to eradicating poverty and ensuring social justice.

Decent work can be achieved in open economies and open societies if we pursue the four following strategic objectives: fundamental principles and rights at work; employment rights for men and women; social protection and social dialogue. The goal of decent work requires that, first and foremost, we listen. Workers need access to basic social protection and employment because poverty cannot be eradicated without employment creation and the introduction of social security schemes for workers.

Democratic stability and good governance are essential to economic growth and social development. Workers' and employers' organizations are vital when elaborating effective policies, particularly those aimed at combating poverty. Social dialogue and strong tripartite institutions and practices can ensure greater coherence between economic and social policies. The capacity of social partners to engage in dialogue is critical when attempting to increase productive employment opportunities, extend social protection and address poverty reduction. Workers need comprehensive training and education programmes to be productive and to enable them to contribute to the development of their country.

Employers and the government have to respond rapidly to the changing needs of their workers. In order for them to be able to do so, they need supportive, transparent and accountable partners for effective social dialogue at a national level. The challenge is to create an environment based on democratic principles that encourages and guarantees respect of human rights, including fundamental freedoms and rights at work. International labour standards should be respected and enshrined in national labour legislation.

In this regard, the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions is working for the amendment of the existing Ethiopian labour law.

Despite the fact that the existing labour law was proclaimed at the end of 2003, we believe it contains certain provisions that are not in the interests of the workers. In this regard, we have submitted our proposal to the Government and the tripartite labour advisory board. Although the board, of which our Confederation is a member, has begun discussions on our proposal, we still need the support of the ILO.

Most importantly, I should like to address the issue of HIV/AIDS. This is a priority for our Confederation because our members are dying owing to this pandemic. To tackle this challenge, our Confederation is conducting wide-scale workplace interventions, such as awareness raising, care and support programmes but the problem is growing in magnitude at an alarming pace. In this regard, I appreciate the support provided by the ILO so far but we need more assistance in order to carry out additional activities to deal with the problem and to protect workers.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that the ILO should further strengthen its support for African countries, especially with regard to efforts to alleviate poverty and unemployment and strengthen social dialogue and capacity building.

Trade unions need to be strengthened and supported in their efforts to improve the lives of the workers. Our Confederation will continue to cooperate closely with the ILO Subregional Office based in Addis Ababa.

Original Arabic: Mr. MAHMOUD MUSTAPHA (*Worker, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya*)

I would like to congratulate the Director-General for his detailed and objective Reports analysing the different topics on the agenda, in particular, the *Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work*. This Report emphasizes the adoption of strategies to combat forced labour. We approve of the Director-General's call for *A global alliance against forced labour*; indeed we all reject forced labour. How can humanity accept people being exploited and forced to work by depriving them of all their rights? I think that it is a form of slavery that is totally unacceptable.

We also support the items raised in the Director-General's Report, *Consolidating progress and moving ahead*, in which he reasserts the importance of increasing efforts to attain the noble objectives to which we aspire as social partners to achieve decent work. This goal is based on the ILO's four strategic objectives relating to the importance of work and dignity of workers. Therefore, we need to take the necessary measures at all levels – regional, national and international – so that everyone has the opportunity to find decent work; if we wish to effectively combat poverty, this is an essential democratic objective.

The Decent Work Agenda relates to the employment of women and young persons. In my country, we have tackled the issue of decent work in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals in order to reduce the effects of poverty. Indeed, decent and productive work in a fair overall environment will certainly lead to economic and social development for all. The ILO must play an effective

role at the national, regional and international level in the shaping of policies to combat poverty and foster economic growth to guarantee decent work as a means of achieving fair globalization.

As to technical cooperation, we call on the ILO to increase the resources set aside for the Arab countries and Africa, in order to respond to the needs of the various social partners. We also urgently request that all financial and technical assistance be increased, in particular that destined for Palestine and the occupied Arab territories, areas in considerable difficulty.

Furthermore, we request the ILO to extend the use of the Arabic language to cover all of its activities, sessions of the Governing Body, sectoral meetings, committees and publications.

Whilst we welcome the efforts of the Director-General and of the missions he has sent to the occupied Arab territories and Syrian Golan Heights, we condemn the continued flagrant human rights violations perpetrated by the Zionist forces of occupation. We should also like to highlight the plight of the Iraqi people, hundreds of whom fall victim everyday to the suffering being visited upon them. This blood bath and this ongoing war are affecting all types of economic activity. We appeal to the international community to put an end to all the forms of terrorism perpetrated by the United States and its allies for the purposes of maintaining their military occupation in Iraq. We also reject any intervention in Sudan in the name of the situation in Darfur, which is a domestic issue that must be resolved within a regional framework by the institutions of the African Union.

Several Arab and Muslim countries have been attacked under the pretext of combating terrorism, but the real terrorism is that perpetrated against the Palestinian people by the Israeli occupying forces, with the military support of the United States; the real terrorism is the occupation of Iraq, despite international rejection of that occupation and of that war.

Mr. SUNMONU (*representative, Organization of African Trade Union Unity*)

I join the other speakers before me in expressing my appreciation to the Chairperson of the Governing Body and the Director-General, for their respective Reports to this Conference.

My organization and all African workers are happy that the Finance Committee of this Conference has approved the 2006-07 budget of the ILO. The 1.1 per cent increase in the budget over that for the current biennium is welcome, as the ILO cannot be expected to do more for its constituents without a substantial increase in its budget.

Youth unemployment has assumed a worrisome dimension in almost all countries of the world. The situation is even more acute in the developing countries, particularly in Africa, where more than 60 per cent of the population is composed of young people. Unemployed young people become the recruitment targets of warlords in the conflicts in several countries in Africa and other parts of the world. Unemployed youths often become victims of criminal gangs such as drug barons and human traffickers. It is, therefore, imperative that the creative and enterprising energy of the youth should be utilized through the prioritization of decent employment for the youth, without neglecting the utilization of the expertise and experience of older workers. Decent employment for all should replace the neo-liberal

policy of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers of the World Bank and the IMF which, in reality are neither increasing jobs nor reducing poverty.

I cannot pursue my address without expressing our appreciation and gratitude to the ILO which, through the Regional Office for Africa and the bureau for workers' and employers' activities, ACTRAV and ACT-EMP, assisted the African social partners, workers and employers in the preparation of the Social Partners Forum held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso in September last year.

The conclusions and recommendations of the forum contributed immensely to the success of the African Union's Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation, which was also held in Ouagadougou, from 8 to 9 September 2004.

African workers and employers still need the financial and technical assistance of the ILO for the follow-up and implementation of the conclusions of the Ouagadougou Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation. We, in the Organization of African Trade Union Unity, would like to replace poverty reduction with wealth creation. It is an aberration to say "poverty reduction" because if you create work, poverty takes care of itself.

The invaluable technical and financial assistance of the ILO, its sectors and the Africa Regional Office will be needed to build the capacity of the Organization of African Trade Union Unity and its affiliates in Africa in the following areas: in the ongoing labour legislation reforms in many African countries; strengthening of trade union and workers' capacity in decent work creation and in the organization and transformation of the informal economy; capacity building in information and communication technology and upgrading of ICT facilities for workers' education, research, information and publications; capacity building in conflict prevention, management and post-conflict reconstruction; gender mainstreaming, with particular emphasis on the empowerment of women, action against HIV/AIDS, youth employment, organization and recruitment of new union members, etc.; and, finally, capacity building in occupational safety and health, and other means of social protection.

Let me conclude by sharing with you our thoughts on the ongoing debate about the solution to debt, poverty and underdevelopment particularly in Africa. African countries have paid their debts more than three times over. For those who claim to love Africa, the unconditional cancellation of Africa's debt, and the unconditional repatriation of all Africa's stolen assets back to Africa are what Africa needs to overcome the deliberate policy of poverty and underdevelopment into which Africa and other developing countries have been trapped.

Neo-liberal policy procedures are not the solution to Africa's and other developing countries' socio-economic problems. The fast-tracking of Africa's economic integration, coupled with fair trade and the consolidation of the ongoing democratic process in Africa that make the satisfaction of the basic needs of the people and social development the foundation for economic development, are all that Africa needs to break the vicious cycle of debt, poverty and underdevelopment. These are the kinds of policies that the ILO should be pushing in the international arena. These are things that will ensure the moral authority of the ILO over the protagonists of neo-liberal and anti-people policies.

African workers and trade unions express their complete support for the struggle of the Palestinian people for a Palestinian State with its capital in Jerusalem, living in peace and harmony with their Israeli cousins. The African Union Chairman, President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, and President Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria, both African Heads of State, support our position on unconditional debt cancellation. Let me quote President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, just three days ago when he was addressing the African tripartite group here, I asked him to confirm that my recollection was correct that, in October last year, at the NEPAD meeting in Johannesburg, when I asked about his country's debt problem, his reply was "Take the case of my country, Algeria, they say we owe \$10. We pay \$26, and they say Algeria still owes \$9. That means that after owing \$10, and having paid \$26, they have erased only \$1 from the debt of \$10." That is the situation, that is the reason why we insist that it is not out of charity, it is because of economic justice that we say Africa's debt should be unconditionally cancelled, and we want also the unconditional repatriation of Africa's assets back to Africa.

Original Spanish: Mr. YANEZ POL (representative, Latin American Union of Municipal Workers)

I would like to congratulate the Director-General of the ILO, Mr. Juan Somavia, on the very thought-provoking Report he has submitted to this assembly.

Our Organization is concerned about violations of trade union freedom and collective bargaining rights, which remain of serious concern in Latin America and the Caribbean. This is not just a matter of denial of rights, but goes as far as attacks and assaults on the personal freedom, physical integrity and even the very lives of workers, trade union leaders, and even their families. Those who do not respect the freedom of association carry out these illegitimate acts so as to terrorize us, to hinder and prevent us from exercising our rights through fear; the fear of losing our jobs, worsen working conditions and finding ourselves in dire poverty.

However, we, as municipal workers, have responded to those attacks and violations with a more robust defence of our rights. Today, we demand full compliance with Conventions Nos. 87, and 98, which enshrine the fundamental rights to trade union membership, freedom of association and collective bargaining.

We also welcome and thank the Governing Body of this Organization for its efforts to ensure the accurate broad and application of the corresponding international standards of work, so as to ensure the full enjoyment of these fundamental human rights and to put an end to a situation of injustice and abuses, which are an international disgrace. Unfortunately, although decades have elapsed since these Conventions were adopted, and in spite of their almost universal ratification, violations of the freedom of association and collective bargaining persist. This leads us to believe that we are witnessing a kind of wholesale dismissal of democratic labour rights that are based on the respect of fundamental human rights.

With respect to these rights, we also refer to the Conventions that are linked to Conventions Nos. 87 and 98, in particular, Conventions Nos. 151 and 154, which, in conjunction, constitute the basic core international standards governing trade union mem-

bership, freedom of association and collective bargaining.

We, the municipal workers of Latin America and the Caribbean, believe that the respect for freedom of association and collective bargaining constitutes the basis of a world where decent work prevails, as defined by the Director-General of the ILO. This decent work can only be achieved if municipal workers participate actively in determining their own working conditions and level of remuneration, through collective bargaining and through the full exercise of their right to organize. All of this must occur within a framework of respect for the fundamental human rights enshrined in the ILO Conventions.

Our position is supported by the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up, which state that by freely joining the ILO member States have accepted the principles and rights enshrined in its Constitution and in the Declaration of Philadelphia. In doing so, they have committed to respecting, promoting and implementing, in good faith and in compliance with the Constitution, those principles and rights, in particular the freedom of association, trade union freedom and collective bargaining, irrespective of whether they have ratified the underscore corresponding Conventions.

Drawing on this ILO Declaration, we underscore the urgent need to promote and ensure the existence of fair, balanced and duly regulated tripartite labour relations.

We are confident that by facilitating collective negotiations between social partners that are on an equal footing in terms of rights, we could achieve a fairer distribution of income; stabilize private and public investment; foster economic growth and increased participation; and strengthen democracy.

In today's globalized economy, the denial of the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining in one state also affects workers in other countries.

The denial of these rights by many central and municipal authorities constitutes a violation of human rights. It also violates the provisions of the ILO Constitution, whose Preamble states that the failure of any nation to adopt humane conditions of labour is an obstacle in the way of other nations which desire to improve the conditions in their own countries.

Therefore, the fact that the Government of Chile refuses to grant municipal workers the right to negotiate the conditions of their work undermines the fundamental human rights of all municipal workers in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Given the nature and functions of the municipalities, and their role within the public sector, the provision of the corresponding public services must be ensured in a framework of collective labour relations. In this sense, individual labour relations must be complementary to, and not replace or eliminate, collective bargaining agreements. The time has come to put an end to the daily violations of the rights to collective bargaining, for the sake of the economy, democracy, good governance and, above all, for the sake of moral dignity. If we want to build a world where human rights are upheld, each of us has the duty to do everything in his or her power to make the enjoyment of the freedom of association and collective bargaining a reality.

Unfortunately, little progress has been made with regard to the collective bargaining rights of municipal workers in Chile and Latin America. In recent years, there has even been an increase in violations of these rights under the pretext of fiscal crises, structural adjustment and labour flexibility. Therefore, ULAT-MUN and ISP have filed a series of complaints for violations of these rights, as is the case for the complaint files against the Chilean Government in June 2003 for violation of international Conventions. The complaint is currently before the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations. As I said earlier, Chilean municipal workers are protected under Convention No. 98, which enshrines the right to collective bargaining.

I would like to conclude by calling on the ILO Governing Body and other competent bodies within the Organization to take urgent action to end the serious threat posed to Chilean municipal officials and to formally request the Chilean authorities to comply with the underlying principles and provisions of Conventions No. 87, 98, 151 and 154; and to ensure that the Chilean authorities and the legislature suspend, at the earliest opportunity, any legislative initiative that directly or indirectly, openly or in a hidden way, violates the recognized human rights of municipal workers; and to put pressure on the Chilean authorities to ensure the effective implementation of the underlying principles and provisions of Conventions No. 87, 98, 151 and 154.

We are confident that our cause is just since the best way to fight for the rights of workers is to provide a framework that provides for strong trade unions.

Mr. RAUT (*Worker, Nepal*)

We would like to mark this as a great opportunity to address the 93rd Session of the International Labour Conference representing the workers from such a beautiful Himalayan country as Nepal.

We all know that this session of the Conference is focusing on forced labour and promoting youth employment. Both these issues are of great importance to us because we are concentrating on how we can eliminate different forms of forced labour from our country, while at the same time we have to be serious about increasing employment opportunities for youths since the unemployment rate is very high and the labour market is very contracted for various socio-economic and political reasons.

On the issue of the elimination of forced labour, much work has been carried out during the last couple of years. The kamaiya system (debt bondage) was abolished through a law passed in 2001, but the rehabilitation of the freed kamaiyas is not satisfactory. The ILO's role was very crucial and vital in bringing those freed kamaiyas into the decent work framework. However, the Government's work and responsibility during and after abolition were not sufficient. Strong commitment and support are still required for the sustainable rehabilitation of those freed kamaiyas from national and international well-wishers.

Further, there are still other forms of forced labour systems prevailing in our country, particularly the Haliya, Haruwa and Charuwa systems in the agriculture sector, which are not addressed seriously. It has been estimated that around 200,000 workers are still in one or other form of forced labour. The increasing violence and conflict in our

country has affected all socio-economic and political situations. Rural and very poor segments of the population are most affected by this. Without a doubt, it has increased the flow of migration as well as trafficking, thus supporting one of the causes of forced labour. Likewise, the elimination of child labour is becoming very crucial in our context because it could also help to increase the very important role that the Time-bound Programme on the Worst Forms of Child Labour is playing towards the elimination of child labour in Nepal. Therefore, it is quite important for the elimination of forced labour that the Time-bound Programme be continued as committed.

Legal protection and benefits could be one of the effective measures to eliminate forced labour; measures such as the fixation of minimum wages and social security could help very effectively in this respect. Several experiences have already proved that the implementation of minimum wages improves the quality of life of workers. However, in our case, minimum wages fixation in the informal sector is not being taken up as a major issue by the State. Likewise, labour standards and other workers' rights, especially in informal sectors, could be very effective tools in the sustainable elimination of forced labour. Unfortunately, monitoring labour standards in agriculture and other informal sectors is not a priority of the State. However, we are strongly demanding for separate legislation for informal workers and the identification and registration of such workers.

Political changes in Nepal have created a lot of hindrances to and obstacles for workers' rights, trade union rights, human rights and freedom of the press because government authorities seem biased or indifferent with regard to those issues. This situation has discouraged fundamental principles and rights at work and has created a very difficult situation for trade unions. Several trade union leaders and activists have been detained by the State from our organization as well as other trade unions of Nepal.

For the effective and sustainable elimination of forced labour, child labour and trafficking, as well as for improving the socio-economic status of workers, especially those in the informal economy, the proper implementation of related legislation is very important. However, in our country's case, legislative provisions are not being implemented effectively, such as the Kamaiya Labour Prohibition Act, and the Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act, among others.

In this changing national and international situation, including the globalization phenomena, our economy, which was very informal from the beginning and had quite limited formal sectors, is facing great challenges.

The limited formal sectors are being informalized owing to the present situation. Almost 96 per cent of the workforce is under the informal economy. Therefore, formalizing the informal economy is another issue that needs to be addressed by all the social partners in Nepal. Although trade unions are taking assertive action to organize the vast informal sectors, it is time for the tripartite partners to understand that informalization is not a problem only for the trade unions; this will soon become a problem for the Government and employers if it is not taken seriously now.

Last, but not least, I would like to express my thanks to all those present here and wish for the results-based success of this 93rd Session of the International Labour Conference. I hope that it shall be able to draw up some very effective measures to eliminate forced labour systems from this world and towards creating very suitable employment opportunities for today's and tomorrow's youth population.

Mr. ZAWDE (*Employer, Ethiopia*)

May I seize this opportunity to commend the International Labour Office for the comprehensive Reports prepared for the Conference.

It is relevant and appropriate for the Organization to place issues concerning the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work on the agenda of the Conference. The Declaration has rightly been considered as a significant tool in the fight against the negative impact of globalization which can be the cause of much social injustice. As employers, we believe in recognizing of the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family as the foundation of freedom, justice and peace.

Implementing the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work is part of the ILO Decent Work Agenda which we committed ourselves to. Having realized this underlying fact, the Ethiopian Employers' Federation places significance on maintaining international labour standards. The ILO Conventions and Recommendations have been the guiding principles at all stages of our programme when dealing with labour issues with the social partners. One of the notable measures taken in Ethiopia is the implementation of a new Labour Proclamation No. 377/2003, which governs employment relations and the established labour administration system.

Another equally important and timely matter indicated in the report of the Director-General, *Consolidating progress and moving ahead* is the promotional framework for occupational safety and health. In this regard, the right to a safe and healthy working environment should be respected at all levels in order to secure a safe and healthy working environment, through a system of defined rights, responsibilities and duties where the principle of prevention is accorded the highest priority from our side. We strongly support the need to promote a safety culture by fostering and promoting globally various activities, campaigns and special events, such as the World Day for Safety and Health at Work, which is celebrated on 28 April each year.

Another important matter mentioned in the Report of the Director-General is strengthening tripartism and social dialogue. Social dialogue has been, and will continue, to be the most indispensable instrument in the progress of human civilization. Social dialogue is the very foundation of the ILO, an international organization created on tripartite principles of participatory deliberation, where the importance of social consensus on basic standards for a global economy has long been widely respected. In this regard, the Ethiopian Employers' Federation has a strong linkage with its constituents, Governments and workers, putting social dialogue at the top of the agenda to serve as a tool in transforming and enriching human knowledge, averting potentially dangerous conflicts, and promoting understanding among the various actors.

The process of the third national election held recently in Ethiopia is a process of mutual understanding and social dialogue. The numerous debates held between competing parties prior to their election on their respective policies is a sign of peace, freedom and democracy. Due to this free and democratic process, a massive turnout of voters was seen throughout the country, which was the result of a determined and joint effort.

Within the context of a strategy for poverty reduction and decent work, social security takes a special place. The lack of social protection is one of our core problems and affects over 90 per cent of our population. Except in the civil service and a few private businesses, the majority of employers do not have social protection, unfortunately an integral part of our poverty. In this regard, though re-established very recently, the Ethiopian Employers' Federation is taking radical reform measures in line with the Government development strategy and has channelled its resources and energy into development activities, with a view to achieving rapid economic growth and alleviating poverty.

The creation of employment is perhaps the biggest challenge for developing countries. Investment, entrepreneurship, decent work, productivity and training are all vital ingredients in the formulation of an effective strategy for employment. This should be the message that we take home.

Allow me to thank the Director-General for his unflinching support in promoting different activities. Presently, there are numerous ILO project programmes and activities in which the tripartite bodies in general, and the Ethiopian Employers' Federation in particular, are engaged. Activities such as prevention of HIV/AIDS in the workplace, productivity improvement, tripartite social dialogue, dispute settlement, managing disability in the workplace, and child labour are just a few examples. These are activities and initiatives to enhance the capacity of the Employers' Federation. I would like to place on record the excellent collaboration that we have from the Bureau for Employers' Activities, the Pan-African Employers' Confederation, as well as the dedication of the ILO Regional Office for Africa and the Subregional Office in Addis Ababa to the promotion of ILO ideals, strategic objectives and activities.

It is high time for all of us to join hands and work together on the winning formula to implement the strategies in the Report and the vision set by the ILO. Finally, I would like to express my Federation's firm commitment to advocating and implementing the strategies indicated in the report. Let me once again thank the ILO for providing us with both technical and non-technical assistance, and again highlight the need for the ILO to continue to support our Federation to enable us to discharge our responsibilities.

Original French: Ms. NDONG (representative, World Movement of Christian Workers)

What type of worker does occupational health and safety apply to?

For 40 years, the World Movement of Christian Workers has been working to promote the value and dignity of work. It has been campaigning for decent work for all and the promotion of a new society. This is why we are pleased that the ILO is at the forefront of this struggle, which will lead public and private authorities to implement policies that will

offer real opportunities for access to decent work throughout the world.

Our membership is spread throughout 75 countries in the world. It carries out activities with workers who, for the most part, are from the working class. These thousands of women and men work in different sectors of the informal economy, the fishing sector, free zones, and so on. They are migrant workers, clandestine workers, volunteers and child workers, just to name a few.

These thousands of men, women and children are denied their rights to occupational safety and health. Yet, there is no doubt that they are contributing to the economic development of the country in which they work and, consequently, to the world economy.

Allow us, from this rostrum, to cite just one example, that of the motorcycle taxi drivers: there are thousands of them working in the countries of the South transporting, on a daily basis, thousands of workers who commute between home and work. These workers – both drivers and passengers – are exposed to risks daily without helmets or protective clothing. They are violently run over or gradually poisoned by exhaust fumes – those of you who have visited the beautiful city of Cotonou can confirm this. They are among the 5,000 workers who die each day.

An ILO study has shown that 5,000 workers lose their lives every day as a result of an occupational accident. This means that for the 17 days that we are here for this 93rd Session of the International Labour Conference, which once again is debating whether there should be a Convention that States should ratify and implement, 85,000 men, women and children will die as a result of occupational accidents due to the lack of occupational safety and health. This appalling situation is undeniable proof that workers' protection is a binding right, which brooks no delay. We can act now, without further delay!

Imagine a week in which, day after day, 5,000 persons die as a result of occupational accidents in London, Paris, New York, Sydney and Tokyo: that would be 25,000 workers in one working week. How long would it take the international community to come up with a lasting solution to this appalling situation? We are convinced that it would take them less than two hours.

Inspired by these legitimate and democratic expectations, which are widespread throughout the world, and faced with the humanitarian disaster of 85,000 persons dying in a matter of 17 days, allow me, from this rostrum, to echo the stifled voices of these tens of thousands of people from the working classes. These workers, who are human beings, with as much dignity as you and I, call upon the constituents of the ILO, as of now, to ensure that occupational safety and health is a lasting reality for each worker, without restriction, because each worker, without distinction of class, is worth more than all the gold in the world.

Mr. HASAN (*Worker, Bangladesh*)

I should like to the Chairperson of the Governing Body and the Director-General on their comprehensive Reports.

Based on the Director-General's Report, I wish to make a few very brief comments regarding the situation in my own country.

The Report is a source of great hope for me personally as a delegate at this Conference. However,

reflecting on the real-life situation at home, a number of questions cross my mind concerning how best to translate that hope into effective action to reduce the poverty suffered by the vast majority of the 115 million-strong population, in terms of creating adequate job opportunities for the 20 million unemployed and underemployed young women and men, ensuring a safe and secure workplace and making decent work a reality for the working people.

Efforts are being made at a national level to achieve the Millennium Development Goal of reducing poverty by half by 2015. Prioritizing youth employment as a part of the ILO's work is essential, as poverty cannot be reduced without employment. In order to get a proper job, appropriate education and training are required. Our existing education system is very generalized, traditional, and unsuitable to meet the requirements of emerging job markets influenced by modern technology and globalization.

One new element of globalization in the education sector has been the opening of campuses by western. These private university campuses provide a level of education and training that meet modern-day requirements but at a very high cost which ordinary people cannot meet, which means affluent parents are able to prepare their children to compete in the job market but the vast majority of families do not have such opportunities. There is a clear need to redesign the education system which is crying out for adequate investment.

The education sector in our country receives the largest share of the national budget, but this is still not enough. Donor agencies and other investors are focusing more on other areas. I believe that, to create a meaningful environment and to prepare youth with proper education and training, we need to focus our attention on reforming our education system and channel investment accordingly.

Here, I regret to inform you that Bangladesh has not yet joined the Youth Employment Network (YEN) and I wish to look into this on my return home.

On health and safety matters, we have legislation governing occupational health and safety issues, but the enforcement mechanism is very weak and ineffective. Unless it can be strengthened at a national level, then I do not believe that another instrument will be of much use to our workers.

As for the decent work pilot programme, we have such a scheme in place. It is tripartite in nature, but is not very active. The ILO may look at this matter and put a monitoring mechanism in place.

As regards tripartism and social dialogue, which we all agree are very important if we are to fulfil our aspirations, there is a wide gap between what should happen in theory and what actually goes on in practice. The Government could help in this area by changing its policy to include the workers as partners, rather than as subjects.

Finally, I should like to request the Office to find a way of reducing the duration of the Conference, improving the quality of participation, and introducing a culture of consultation of national delegations before and after the Conference.

(The Conference adjourned at 12.20 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Page

Thirteenth sitting

Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General: Discussion (<i>cont.</i>)	1
<i>Speakers:</i> Mr. Fanheiro, Mr. Zorigtbaatar, Mr. Mohbaliyev, Mr. Keira, Mr. Zinck, Mr. Yesayan, Mr. Martínez, Mr. Soriano, Mr. Djemam, Mr. Tarverdyan, Mr. Farah, Ms. Lanara-Tzotze, Mr. Abdo, Mr. Alemayehu, Mr. Mahmoud Mustapha, Mr. Sunmonu, Mr. Yanez Pol, Mr. Raut, Mr. Zawde, Ms. Ndong, Mr. Hasan.	