



First sitting

Tuesday, 31 May 2005, 10.15 a.m.

Presidents: Mr. Trotman, Worker Vice-Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office, and Mr. Basim Alsalam

OPENING OF THE SESSION

Mr. TROTMAN (Worker Vice-Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office)

It is with the greatest pleasure that I declare this 93rd Session of the International Labour Conference open.

Paragraph 1 of article 25 of the Standing Orders of the Conference says that the Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office shall open the Conference, assisted by the other Officers of the Governing Body. Regrettably, however, Mr. Philippe Séguin, Chairperson of the Governing Body, is unable to be present at the opening of the Conference today. In his absence, one of the Vice-Chairpersons of the Governing Body is required to declare the Conference open.

My colleague, the Employer Vice-Chairperson Mr. Funes de Rioja, with whom I have discussed this matter, has very generously allowed me the honour of opening this 93rd Session of the International Labour Conference.

I should like to thank him – and to thank you as well – for enabling me to take up this great privilege and honour to open the Conference. I also thank him for our excellent working partnership as Officers of the Governing Body, which has allowed us, with the support of the Government benches, to cover much ground during the last year. Because of this we believe that we have a most important and interesting Conference which, in our view, will reinforce the standards and the very high principles for which this International Labour Organization is known. It promises to be an historic Conference.

ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE

Mr. TROTMAN (Worker Vice-Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office)

Our first task is to elect the President of the Conference. I should like to give the floor to Ambassador Yimer of Ethiopia, who will propose a candidate for the presidency of the Conference on behalf of the Government group.

Mr. YIMER (Government, Ethiopia)

It is my great honour and pleasure as Chairperson of the Government group of the International Labour Conference to propose the candidature of Mr. Basim Alsalam, Minister of Labour of Jordan, as President of the 93rd Session of the International Labour Conference. The Government group unani-

mously endorsed Mr. Alsalam's candidature. Mr. Alsalam is a graduate in chemical engineering of Imperial College, London. He has had wide experience in labour issues, both in the public and private sectors, amongst other things, serving as Chairman of the Public Mining Company for the 2000-05 period. In the public sector, he has been a member of the Board of Governors of the Central Bank of Jordan from 1997 to 2005. I have no doubt that his skill and efficiency as an administrator will enable him to guide our work here over the next three weeks, and crown our endeavours with success. I am honoured to submit Mr. Alsalam's candidature as President of this session of the Conference.

Mr. TROTMAN (Worker Vice-Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office)

I thank Ambassador Yimer for the nomination of Mr. Basim Alsalam, Minister of Labour of Jordan, as the President of the Conference. I turn to Mr. Funes de Rioja, Employers' delegate, Argentina, to speak on behalf of the Employers' group.

Original Spanish: Mr. FUNES DE RIOJA (Employer Vice-Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office)

On behalf of the Employers present at this Conference, it is an honour and a pleasure to support the proposal which has just been made by the Ambassador of Ethiopia, that the Minister of Labour of Jordan, Mr. Alsalam, be elected President of this Conference. We have no doubt whatsoever that the Minister has the full support of our group. We are sure that he will give this Conference the relevance it requires and we still have very good memories of the visit we received from the King of Jordan, which was truly an important occasion for all of us who heard him speak. May God enlighten the Minister of Labour of Jordan in this task, for the good of all.

Mr. TROTMAN (Worker Vice-Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office)

I thank Mr. Funes de Rioja, speaking on behalf of the Employers' group. I now give the floor to Mr. Sidi Saïd, Workers' delegate, Algeria, to speak on behalf of the Workers' group.

Original French: Mr. SIDI SAÏD (Worker, Algeria)

On behalf of the Workers' group, I have great pleasure in joining with the proposal made by the Ambassador of Ethiopia and second the nomination of Mr. Basim Alsalam, Minister of Labour of Jor-

dan, as President of the Conference. The Minister is an eminent individual, a person who is fully aware of the issues of the labour world, and I also think it is a great honour for the Arab world to have this proposal accepted. The Workers' group therefore supports and joins with this proposal.

Mr. TROTMAN (Worker Vice-Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office)

The nomination of Mr. Basim Alsalam, Minister of Labour of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, has been duly proposed and seconded. Since there are no more nominations, I declare Mr. Basim Alsalam unanimously elected President of the 93rd Session of the International Labour Conference. I offer him my warmest congratulations and invite him to take the President's Chair. We wish him success.

(Mr. Basim Alsalam, Minister of Labour of Jordan, is elected President of the Conference and takes the President's Chair.)

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Original Arabic: The PRESIDENT

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. I should like to express my sincere gratitude to the Asia and Pacific group for their unanimous support for my nomination to this coveted post.

I should also like to thank the delegates of all the regional groups and his Excellency, the Ambassador of Ethiopia, Mr. Yimer, spokesperson of the Government group, as well as Mr. Funes de Rioja, spokesperson of the Employers' group, and Mr. Trotman, spokesperson of the Workers' group, for the support they expressed on behalf of their respective groups. I should likewise like to thank my colleagues from the Arab group for their support.

This honour which you have conferred on me is in fact an honour for the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, its Government and its people, under the leadership of His Majesty King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein.

Jordan, which acceded to membership of the ILO in 1956, is proud of her special relationship with this Organization – a relationship that has constantly grown and developed over almost five decades, thanks to the commitment of the tripartite constituents in Jordan to the principles and ideals of the ILO, which they have endeavoured to apply and promote.

As a token of the importance Jordan attaches to its relations with the ILO, His Majesty King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein was a guest of honour during the 91st Session of the International Labour Conference in June 2003. He was accompanied by Her Majesty Queen Rania, who kindly accepted the invitation extended by the Director-General of the ILO, Mr. Juan Somavia, to join the group of first ladies and public figures in support of the ILO's campaign against child labour.

Their Majesties' interest in the ILO bears witness to the continuity of the special relationship at the highest level between Jordan and the ILO, which has existed for decades.

I recall these examples of the interaction at the highest level between the ILO and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan as evidence of the fact that our partnership has continued to develop and prosper. It is not limited to the Government, but encompasses the tripartite partners – employers and workers as

well – at every level. Through this partnership, Jordan has manifested its interest in the ILO, and it is in this spirit that I have the honour to preside over this session of the Conference.

Under the leadership of His Majesty King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein, Jordan has endeavoured to consolidate the principles, concepts and values enshrined in the fundamental instruments of the ILO. Jordan has ratified 24 ILO Conventions, seven of which are fundamental Conventions, and the competent authorities are currently considering ratification of the eighth fundamental Convention.

I admit that this is the first time I have participated in the International Labour Conference. I took up the post of Minister of Labour of Jordan only two months ago, and I hope that, as I preside over the work of the Conference, you will bear with me should I make any procedural errors which, I trust, will not be too serious.

Lastly, I count on your cooperation and support so that, working together, we shall be able to achieve the desired results through our discussions, and I trust that our work will reach a successful outcome.

ELECTION OF THE VICE-PRESIDENTS OF THE CONFERENCE

Original Arabic: The PRESIDENT

In accordance with article 25, paragraph 2, of the Standing Orders of the International Labour Conference, we will now elect the Vice-Presidents of the Conference. I now call upon the Clerk of the Conference to read out the nominations made by the groups.

The CLERK OF THE CONFERENCE

The nominations to the posts of Vice-Presidents of the Conference are as follows:

Government group:

Mr. Chiriboga (*Minister of Labour and Employment of Ecuador*)

Employers' group:

Mr. Finlay (*Canada*)

Workers' group:

Ms. Anderson (*Mexico*)

Original Arabic: The PRESIDENT

May I take it that these proposals are adopted?

(The proposals are adopted.)

NOMINATION OF THE OFFICERS OF THE GROUPS

Original Arabic: The PRESIDENT

I will now ask the Clerk of the Conference to read out the names of the persons who have been elected as Officers of the various groups.

The CLERK OF THE CONFERENCE

The groups have chosen their Officers as follows:

Government group:

Chairperson: Mr. Yimer (*Ethiopia*)

Employers' group:

Chairperson: Mr. Funes de Rioja (*Argentina*)

Vice-Chairpersons: Mr. Suzuki (*Japan*)

Mr. Botha (*South Africa*)

Mr. Lima Godoy (*Brazil*)

Mr. Potter (*United States*)

Mr. Barde (*Switzerland*)

Secretary:

Mr. Peñalosa (*International Organisation of Employers*)

Workers' group:
Chairperson: Mr. Trotman (*Barbados*)
Vice-Chairpersons: Mr. Atwoli (*Kenya*)
 Mr. Sidorov (*Russian Federation*)
 Ms. Triana Alvis (*Colombia*)
 Ms. Yacob (*Singapore*)
Secretary: Ms. Biondi (*International Confederation of Free Trade Unions*)

The Officers of the Workers' group, apart from the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairpersons, are: Mr. Ahmed (*Pakistan*), Ms. Anderson (*Mexico*), Ms. Brighi (*Italy*), Mr. Cortizo (*Brazil*), Ms. Diallo (*Guinea*), Ms. Engelen Kefer (*Germany*), Mr. Ghandour (*Sudan*), Mr. Nakajima (*Japan*), Mr. Zellhoefer (*United States*).

CONSTITUTION AND COMPOSITION OF CONFERENCE COMMITTEES

Original Arabic: The PRESIDENT

The next agenda item concerns the constitution of the various committees that will examine matters put before the Conference. The Conference may wish to establish the following committees: the Selection Committee; the Finance Committee; the Committee on the Application of Standards; the Committee on Safety and Health; the Committee on the Fishing Sector; the Committee on Youth Employment.

If there are no objections, May I take it that these proposals are adopted?

(The proposals are adopted.)

COMPOSITION OF THE SELECTION COMMITTEE

Original Arabic: The PRESIDENT

I shall now ask the Clerk of the Conference to read out the nominations made by the groups for the composition of the Selection Committee.

THE CLERK OF THE CONFERENCE

The Composition of the Selection Committee, in conformity with article 4 of the Conference Standing Orders, is as follows:

The 28 Government members are the titular members of the Governing Body of the following countries: Argentina, Bahamas, Brazil, Bulgaria, China, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, France, Gabon, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Republic of Korea, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Lithuania, Mali, Mexico, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Sudan, United Kingdom and United States.

The Deputy Government members are: Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Ghana, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kenya, Luxembourg, Malawi, Morocco, New Zealand, Niger, Oman, Philippines, Romania, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, Uruguay, Venezuela and Viet Nam.

The 14 Employer members are: Mr. Barde (*Switzerland*), Mr. Chen (*China*), Mr. Dahlan (*Saudi Arabia*), Mr. Funes de Rioja (*Argentina*), Mr. Jeetun (*Mauritius*), Mr. Lambert (*United Kingdom*), Mr. Lima Godoy (*Brazil*), Mr. M'Kaissi (*Tunisia*), Mr. Nacoulma (*Burkina Faso*), Mr. Potter (*United States*), Ms. Sasso Mazzufferi (*Italy*), Mr. Suzuki

(*Japan*), Mr. Tabani (*Pakistan*), and Mr. Trogen (*Sweden*).

The Deputy Employer members are: Mr. Anand (*India*), Mr. de Arbeloa (*Venezuela*), Ms. Awassi Atsimadja (*Gabon*), Mr. Cleary (*New Zealand*), Mr. Eremeev (*Russian Federation*), Mr. Ferrer Dufol (*Spain*), Mr. Finlay (*Canada*), Mr. Hilton-Clarke (*Trinidad and Tobago*), Ms. Horvatic (*Croatia*), Mr. Konditi (*Kenya*), Mr. Makeka (*Lesotho*), Mr. Oshinowo (*Nigeria*), Mr. Ricci Muadi (*Guatemala*), and Mr. Soriano (*Philippines*).

With regard to the 14 Worker members, the nominations are the same as those of the Officers of the Workers' group which I read out previously.

The Deputy Worker members are: Ms. Burrow (*Australia*), Mr. Cortebeeck (*Belgium*), Mr. Sand Mortensen (*Denmark*), and Ms. Seminario (*United States*).

Original Arabic: The PRESIDENT

If there are no objections, may I consider that the composition of the Selection Committee is adopted by the Conference.

(The proposals are adopted.)

SUSPENSION OF CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF THE STANDING ORDERS OF THE CONFERENCE

Original Arabic: The PRESIDENT

The next agenda item concerns the suspension of certain provisions of the Standing Orders of the Conference to implement recommendations made by the Governing Body at its 292nd Session, in March 2005, regarding the discussion of the Global Report that the Director-General presents annually under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

My fellow Officers and I unanimously recommend, in accordance with article 76 of the Standing Orders, that the Conference decide that the discussion of the Global Report should not fall under the limitation concerning the number of statements by each member State in plenary, and that, to that extent, article 12, paragraph 3, of the Standing Orders should be suspended. In the case of Government delegations, speaking preference will be given to ministers or to the accredited Government delegate. We further recommend that the Conference decide that, within reasonable limits, the discussion should not be governed by the provisions regarding time limits to speeches and, to that extent, suspend article 14, paragraph 6, of the Standing Orders; and that the Conference decide not to apply, to the extent required, the provisions of article 14, paragraph 2, of the Standing Orders on the sequence in which the floor is given to speakers, in order to facilitate an exchange of views. The speaking order will be decided by the President.

If there are no objections, may I take it that these proposals, made under article 76 of the Standing Orders, will take effect, with the agreement of the Conference, as from its next plenary sitting, which will be held next Monday, 6 June.

(The proposals are adopted.)

The discussion of the Global Report, *A global alliance against forced labour*, will take place on Wednesday, 8 June, during two sittings. There will be no other plenary sittings on that day.

There will be no list of speakers for the Global Report sittings. Participants will be able to register their wish to speak on the day of the discussion itself, by means of the application forms that will be available in the room.

I should now like to say a few words on health and security. At its 288th Session in November 2003, the Governing Body recommended that access to the ILO building should be controlled for the purposes of security. Measures were introduced last year. On behalf of my fellow Officers, may I ask participants to kindly accept any inconvenience that such security measures may entail. We count on the cooperation of all to ensure that Conference activities run smoothly. Please bring to the attention of the guards or secretariat staff any irregularity you feel could compromise the security of individuals or buildings. Please wear at all times the Conference badge that you received at registration.

May we also ask you to respect scrupulously the health rules that have been established, and to bear in mind that we are all responsible for health and security.

With your permission, I should also like to bring to your attention article 13, paragraph 2, of the Standing Orders of the International Labour Conference, under which the President of the Conference is responsible for maintaining order throughout the proceedings. Again, I thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION OF THE PROGRAMME AND BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2006-07

Original Arabic: The PRESIDENT

The Conference this year is called upon to examine the Programme and Budget proposals for the period 2006-07. As these proposals are discussed in the Finance Committee, which is made up exclusively of Government representatives, the next item on our agenda this morning is a preliminary discussion of the draft Programme and Budget proposals for 2006-07 – and other questions.

The purpose of this discussion is to allow the Employers' and Workers' groups to make their statements regarding these proposals. With this I give the floor now to Mr. Botha, South Africa, speaking on behalf of the Employers' group.

Mr. BOTHA (Employer, South Africa)

I am very honoured to present to the International Labour Conference the position of the Employers' group on the Programme and Budget proposals for 2006-07.

Tomorrow the Finance Committee will meet to discuss and make a recommendation on the programme and budget which will be formally adopted in the last week of the International Labour Conference. All information on the Governing Body discussion is contained in Report II. This report shows the outcome of a difficult and long discussion at the March session of the Governing Body. Before presenting our views on it, I would like to remind you that this report represents the consensus arrived at from a tripartite discussion and we therefore do not obviously wish to re-open a full debate during the Conference.

During the long process of strategic budgeting which starts from the Strategic Policy Framework, covering two biennia through to the implementation report, the Employers' group has always fully pre-

sented its views in order to ensure the ILO continues to respond to constituents' needs. We are pleased that this process will be reviewed next November in order to better engage all constituents in the preparation of the programme and budget in the future.

In the different consultations and meetings we had prior to and including the March Governing Body, the Employers' group raised its main priorities. They are mentioned in Annex I of Report II. I obviously do not want to repeat the detail but, in summary, they concern: modernization of international labour standards, increased participation of Employers in the Declaration and IPEC activities, youth employment, entrepreneurship, skills and enterprise development, employment creation, promotion of the Global Campaign on Social Security, increased activities on occupational health and safety, and fighting HIV/AIDS, promotion of social dialogue and strengthening of employers' organizations.

The proposed programme and budget does not respond to all our priorities since it is the outcome of a negotiation amongst three groups. We can take some satisfaction from the fact that the emphasis will be put on youth employment, as also indicated in the Director-General's Report to this Conference, and we support the development of the decent work country programmes since they really involve national social partners in ILO activities. On the other hand, we regret that the document does not prioritize activities according to constituents' needs and that greater rationalization and associated savings were not achieved by removing overlapping in departments.

We also regret that institutional investments which concern accommodation, security and new technology have led to decreases in nearly all activities undertaken by headquarters in Geneva. This situation is a real concern for our group as it will affect the future day-to-day operations of the ILO. Nevertheless, we have taken note of the Office initiative for a better monitoring of these institutional investments.

To finance these investments, the proposed programme and budget represents a 1.1 per cent growth. We welcome this small increase, even if it is not sufficient to cover all the various demands of investments sought and the technical departments will have to continue with smaller budgets. We regret this trend and we hope that to better monitor these kinds of investments in the future the Office will initiate CAPEX budgets. We feel strongly that the ILO must maintain its competencies and expertise in issues relating to the world of work and should not broaden its activities or shift its focus to other fields outside its mandate.

As indicated in the report before this Conference, several governments and major contributors were not satisfied with these programme and budget proposals. While the Employers' group understands the motivations for a tighter budgetary policy in the ILO and the need to find new savings, our group supported this proposal as a compromise between the need to modernize the International Labour Organization and maintain the level of activities for constituents. We would seek their support in adapting the programme and budget.

On behalf of the Employers' group, I wish to express our appreciation regarding the early consultations held on the Programme and Budget proposals for 2006-07 and from the March discussion, which led to a very broad support on these proposals.

We are pleased by the emphasis placed on freedom of association, the continued vigilance required for it to exist in all member States, as well as the strengthening of independent organizations of employers and of workers. We also welcome activities in favour of poverty alleviation through employment promotion, the global campaign for social protection, including combating HIV/AIDS and the continuity with previous programme and budgets.

As indicated by my colleague, Mr. Botha, we regret that despite a positive growth, technical activities will be affected by a decrease in their budget. While employment is at the heart of the ILO, its budget should have been increased to respond to urgent constituents' needs. We would like to encourage donors to support employment through a better and increased technical cooperation budget allocated to this main priority.

We have observed that the strategic approach of the document provided less detail, thereby making it difficult to ascertain what exactly was proposed. We would like to invite the Office and the Governing Body to review the future strategic budgeting process, perhaps following good practice in other organizations.

We have recognized and appreciated the transparent approach to the budget development process last March and a balance has been struck between the interests of the constituents, despite a lower overall figure than originally presented. We consider the new proposals respond to the priorities that we expressed, especially youth employment and social dialogue. We would like to stress that employers will work to ensure that Decent Work Country Programmes also have an emphasis on employment as indicated by the Director-General in his response to the Governing Body.

However, we think that further savings are possible. Such savings should be reallocated within the budget but investment in essential areas such as staff capacity should not be reduced. We also note that the Office recognized the need to provide for capital expenditure and maintenance.

Despite the reservations expressed by major contributors last March on the level of the budget, we support this text and we hope that governments would be able to support it in order to achieve a full consensus. My clear understanding is that the ILO needs strong support from all governments and social partners in order to improve the world of work.

Original French: Mr. BLONDEL (Worker, France)

This Conference will have to deal with many subjects, all of considerable importance for the world of work and for the guarantees which workers – both those at work and those who are not – are entitled to expect. It is clear that once again, the ILO will deliberately commit itself to activities intended to meet the aspirations of the majority.

On its own ground and using its own methods, it will contribute to reducing the social deficit, ensuring decent work and progressing towards freedom and democracy, thus meeting the challenges of globalization, while building a more just society and

developing trade union rights. This is an enormous programme, given the present state of our societies.

In order to meet these needs, we have to ensure that the ILO has the means to implement its policy: first, by confirming its authority through increased participation by trade unions, employers and governments; and second, by providing the necessary financial resources. That is what the Governing Body has endeavoured to do at its March session and during the development of the Programme and Budget proposals for 2006-07.

Given the fact that the budgetary policy of zero growth in relative terms has led to a 15 per cent decline in our resources since 1978 and, further, that the financial status accorded to the ILO as compared to the other international organizations in the United Nations family is increasingly being reduced, and referring to our previous discussions on the follow-up to the report of the independent World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, recalling the resolution of the 59th Session of the United Nations General Assembly aimed at promoting international labour standards and improving coherence between the agencies of the United Nations – a concern that was also raised at the European Regional Meeting this February in Budapest – and, finally, taking into account the items included in what we sometimes call “incompressible expenditure” – the Committee on Freedom of Association, international labour standards, the Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV), among others – and at the express request of the Workers' group, the Director-General had proposed an increase in the budget of about 4.3 per cent.

After a lengthy debate, and a number of exchanges of views, it was proposed to seek consensus on a 1.1 per cent increase. The Governing Body approved this, and it is now being submitted for your decision.

We are well aware that, regrettably, several major contributors will maintain reservations and oppose this proposal. One country's negative stance has even gone so far as to call into question equality between countries, implying that some countries rank higher, while others should go along with the decisions of the major contributors.

From this rostrum I would like to say that such an interpretation is unacceptable. It goes against the spirit and letter of the Organization's original mandate, as laid down in 1919. Contributions are assessed on the basis of the economic situation of each country, i.e. their wealth, and the aim is to ensure that the wealthier help the poorer countries.

This is also a form of workers' solidarity. The representatives of governments therefore have to take a very serious decision indeed. Either the proposal of the Governing Body is approved, confirming our willingness to support and improve the situation in the world of work, or it is rejected, in which case the ILO will be weakened and certain countries will publicly demonstrate that they are more inclined to support military conquests than to promote peace and freedom.

Place your trust in solidarity, in the future and in prosperity for all: support the budget presented by the Governing Body.

Original Arabic: The PRESIDENT

I shall now give the floor to Mr. Trotman, Worker Vice-Chairperson of the Governing Body, to speak

for the Workers' group and to express their opinions concerning the Programme and Budget for 2006-07.

Mr. TROTMAN (Worker, Barbados)

I wish to pledge you our full cooperation during the course of this Conference.

The entire Workers' group supports the position taken by brother Marc Blondel on our behalf. I wish to go beyond that to make the observation that I am among those persons sometimes referred to as minorities. It is not because I am under 21, because if you look at my head, you will realize that there must have been a few more than 21 years. And it is not because of the number of persons of my colour, because sometimes we are the majority in terms of numbers in our various countries, but rather it is because over time, because of history and because of nature, we have been marginalized. Marginalized through trade and through economic measures generally. Marginalized through world politics. Marginalized in the form of governance which we would wish to have for ourselves. Marginalized in the level of wealth retention which we have been able to obtain and maintain. Marginalized in the level of governance which there has been.

Among persons like myself you will also find indigenous people, migrant labourers and women – and there are several other people who might fall into this particular group of persons who are marginalized. If there is one thing that we have in abundance, it is our will to raise our living standards, because we realize that if we are going to make the world a better place for the industrialized countries and for ourselves as well, in an interdependent world, we have to raise our living standards and help you in the industrialized world maintain your living standards.

We have the will to create wealth and to eradicate poverty. Now, we cannot see ourselves eradicating poverty unless we create wealth. We have the will to fight for freedom – freedom of association, freedom of choice, freedom to make decisions even when those decisions do not agree with the decisions of others. In short, we have the will to see democracy become alive and flourishing in our countries, and we do not want to believe that we are subject to a particular cabal or tribe or that any political group can subordinate us and remove our freedoms.

If we wish to achieve this, then we need assistance. There is no other agency that is better placed to make these objectives possible than the International Labour Organization. There is no other organization that has a similar opportunity to bring peace to the world, to bring democracy to the people in the world, to bring hope to people of all classes and colours, to end tribal warfare, and indeed to end all warfare. There is no organization that is able to do this other than the ILO.

Maybe the ILO has not done as well as it should have done in achieving these things in the past. We

would like to say unequivocally that in the recent past we have been improving our performance. We have been improving the quantity of our work to raise standards and to help to bring that peace, to help to bring that governance, to help to bring that democracy, to help to improve individuals' lives and performance, and to help to make workers more efficient, and therefore to create wealth.

We have been able to improve the quality of the effort as well. We think that in doing so we have heightened the profile of the ILO and we have demonstrated that the Organization's future needs to be supported and underpinned. It cannot be done with a reduced budget. It needs an increased budget; but in the absence of an increased budget, it needs the current budget which has been brought before this Conference. If you wish to see a better world, if you wish to see a better life for people around the world, please support this budget. We urge you to do so, and we thank you in advance for doing just that.

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY TO THE OFFICERS OF THE CONFERENCE

Original Arabic: The PRESIDENT

The fact that the next plenary sitting will not be held before 6 June implies that the everyday tasks related to the organization of the Conference will be carried out by the Officers of the Conference, if the Conference wishes to confer on them the necessary powers to do so.

I shall now ask the Clerk of the Conference to read out, for your approval, the delegation of authority.

The CLERK OF THE CONFERENCE

The General Conference of the International Labour Organization hereby delegates to its President and three Vice-Presidents authority to take any decisions or perform any functions within the competence of the Conference, with respect to any matter that needs to be dealt with before the Conference resumes its plenary sittings, unless the Officers consider that the Conference should hold a sitting to discuss such matters.

Decisions taken under this delegation of authority will be set out in the *Provisional Record* of the work of the Conference.

This delegation shall take effect at the end of this sitting and shall terminate when the Conference resumes its plenary sittings.

Original Arabic: The PRESIDENT

If there are no objections, I take it that the delegation of authority is accepted.

(The delegation of authority is accepted.)

I now declare closed the first sitting of the 93rd Session of the International Labour Conference.

(The Conference adjourned at 11.30 a.m.)

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