

**Nineteenth sitting**

Friday, 19 June 2009, 10.20 a.m.

President: Mr Hosssain

The PRESIDENT

It is my honour to call to order the 19th sitting of the International Labour Conference in this 98th Session. Before we begin, I will give the floor to the Clerk of the Conference for an announcement.

The CLERK OF THE CONFERENCE

I wish to inform the Conference that, in accordance with article 54, paragraph 5, of the Standing Orders of the International Labour Conference, the workers' electoral college confirmed yesterday, 18 June 2009, the appointment of Mr Sam Gurney of the Trade Union Congress, United Kingdom, as Governing Body Worker regular member in replacement of Mr Simon Steyne with effect from November 2008.

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE:
SUBMISSION, DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL**

The PRESIDENT

We are now approaching the end of our work but there remains one really important task before us before we move on to our closing ceremony. In our first sitting on Wednesday, 3 June 2009, the Conference took a decision to follow the Governing Body's recommendation to establish a Committee of the Whole on Crisis Responses and a Global Summit within the plenary of the Conference to discuss the crisis. The Conference will now proceed to the examination and approval of the report of the Committee of the Whole and of the proposed text of a resolution on "Recovering from the crisis: A Global Jobs Pact," which has emerged as one of the outcomes of the Committee's deliberations. The report of the Committee's discussions is published in *Provisional Record* No. 19 and the proposed text is in *Provisional Record* No. 19A.

The Officers of the Committee of the Whole are now invited to come up to the podium to submit the report and proposed text to the Conference for consideration and adoption. The Officers are as follows: the Chairperson is Ambassador Rapacki of Poland; the Employer Vice-Chairperson is Mr Funes de Rioja of Argentina; and the Worker Vice-Chairperson is Sir Roy Trotman of Barbados. The Committee elected Ms Dembsher of Austria as its Reporter.

I now invite Ms Dembsher, the Reporter of the Committee, to present the Committee's report and the proposed text of the resolution.

*Original German: Ms DEMBSHER (Government, Austria;
Reporter of the Committee of the Whole on Crisis Responses)*

It is with pride and deep satisfaction that I present to you the outcome of the discussions of the Committee of the Whole on behalf of all its members. I am going to continue my brief remarks in English.

(The speaker continues in English.)

On behalf of the Committee of the Whole I am presenting our report to the Conference for adoption. The main outcome of the deliberations of the Committee is the document entitled: "Recovering from the crisis: A Global Jobs Pact". It is contained in *Provisional Record* No. 19A. The report on the proceedings of the Committee of the Whole presents the way we arrived at this draft text. It is now in *Provisional Record* No. 19 before you.

When the Committee agreed on the final draft of the Global Jobs Pact on Wednesday afternoon, it did so with a deep sense of responsibility for finding timely responses to the current crisis.

The Global Jobs Pact shows that the ILO, in the 90th year of its existence, is as relevant as ever when it comes to safeguarding the interests of workers and enterprises in critical historical situations. This Pact puts employment, working conditions and social protection firmly in the centre of the global debate on recovery policies. As this crisis is truly global, our response is likewise.

The Global Jobs Pact is probably the first global policy instrument dealing with the crisis. Carried by a solid and unique level of consensus among employers, workers and governments, it is a political heavyweight and will have its impact on coming policy design processes at the national and international levels.

Something else is new. This Pact does not stop at crisis mitigation: it maps out the road to recovery. And its ambition does not stop there either. In paragraph 6, it boldly says, "The world should look different after the crisis." What this means is that it should look better for everyone. What more can an International Labour Conference demand?

Let me remind you that we started this session of the Conference without any draft text. So what we propose was entirely produced during this session. We have behind us an intense and innovative series of deliberations. We had ten thematic dialogues, where external experts helped us to assess the extent of the crisis, its social and employment fallout, and the options for the design of counteracting policy instruments. We had a series of general debates – intense, constructive, long and successful hours of

consensus seeking in the Drafting Group, and plenary discussions on the draft outcome document. A unique sense of responsibility, willingness to achieve consensus and a good sense of humour prevailed in the deliberations.

We have documented our proceedings in a report. It may be long but we decided that the unique historical situation warranted a relatively detailed record of our work. Sometime in the future, when the history of social policy in the twenty-first century is written – hopefully not in another crisis situation – it will bear witness to the strength of our Organization, which, I think, we are all proud of today.

I would like to close with heartfelt thanks to all the Committee members, all our experts, the members of the Drafting Group, the secretariat that supported us, the Vice-Chairpersons and finally our Chairperson, who so ably and determinedly led us through the complex process.

It was a unique and rewarding experience for all of us.

Mr FUNES DE RIOJA (*Employer, Argentina; Employer Vice-Chairperson of the Committee of the Whole on Crisis Responses*)

After more than two weeks of difficult and lengthy discussions, I am happy to report to you, not only a successful outcome from the Committee of the Whole – a resolution entitled: “Recovering from the Crisis: A Global Jobs Pact” – but also a strong endorsement of this product by the tripartite partners.

We achieved this outcome through a spirit of cooperation, one that started back at the November Governing Body and again in March, and was maintained right up until we concluded our work yesterday.

We achieved this because we – employers, workers and governments – understood the responsibility before us. We understood that the stakes were high. We understood that failure was not an option.

In summary, we achieved this excellent outcome because we recognized collectively the powerful message that a consensus solution-orientated product would send.

Let me now highlight just a few elements from the Pact and say why we as employers so heartily support it.

First, it is a practical framework for practical action at the national level. The Pact is a road map for the period ahead and a resource of practical policies for the multilateral system, governments, workers and employers that will enable each country to formulate a policy package specific to its situation and priorities. In short, it avoids any prescriptive one-size-fits-all approach.

Second, it promotes market principles. The Pact not only clearly promotes efficient and well-regulated trade and markets, but it also sends a strong message on the need to avoid protectionist solutions.

It clearly promotes the need to create sustainable enterprises as the way to achieve productive employment and decent work. In particular, it very explicitly recognizes the contribution of small and medium-sized enterprises and micro-enterprises to job creation, and the need to promote measures and a regulatory environment conducive to their growth.

The issue of informality is clearly highlighted, as is the need for strategies to achieve the transition to formal employment.

Third, it recognizes current realities faced by enterprises. The reality is that many enterprises are struggling to survive, some are going out of business and others are laying off staff. The Pact calls for practical schemes to help firms get through the crisis, such as work sharing and partial unemployment benefits. For those who are out of a job, it suggests, *inter alia*, focusing on measures to maintain employment and facilitate transitions from one job to another, as well as to support access to the labour market for those without a job and to implement vocational and entrepreneurial skills programmes.

Fourth, it underlines the importance of social protection. The Pact resists the call for a utopian, universal global social protection floor. Instead, it calls on countries to work towards adequate social protection for all on a national basis, noting the key importance of social protection systems in tackling the crisis and helping, in particular, the most vulnerable. In addition, it underscores the importance of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of social protection systems.

Fifth, it maintains a focus on skills and education. Education and training remain the most important means to improve employment prospects, and are key to future growth and productivity. To do this, the Pact notes the need to increase equal access and opportunities for skills development, quality training and education to prepare for recovery.

Effective, properly targeted, active labour market policies are all clearly signposted in the Pact as key tools to be utilized in recovery plans.

Sixth, it emphasizes the vital role of dialogue. At a time when confidence is at a low level, enhanced dialogue is needed to overcome mistrust and find agreed ways forward. Not surprisingly, the Pact emphasizes the important role dialogue can play, especially in times of heightened social tension, in helping to find solutions.

Let me now turn to the challenge before us, and in particular for the ILO. I said at the start of the Conference that what we need first are words, then action. Well, we have our words. We have our Pact.

We as constituents have done our bit. We have created a comprehensive road map built on a strong consensus. It is a remarkable achievement.

Now comes the hard bit: the action.

I fully accept what the Director-General said this week: that we all have a responsibility to utilize this Pact in formulating solutions. Employers will not shrink from that responsibility.

In doing so, let me now set out our expectations.

First, we ask the Director-General to write to all member States asking them how they intend, in tripartite terms, to utilize the Pact. We suggest that the Office comes back to the Governing Body at a future point with an analysis of how these concrete efforts are progressing.

Second, we suggest that the International Labour Organization's presence at the forthcoming G20 Summit in Pittsburgh is a tripartite one.

Third, that we use the G20 meeting in Pittsburgh as a “pit stop”. We have a useful product to convey to global leaders, but we need at that stage to communicate to them how we are utilizing it at the national level.

Fourth, that the Office directly supports employers' and workers' organizations in developing strategies to exit the crisis. In many cases, our organizations need deeper assistance for more effec-

tive national policy engagement. This will require additional resources.

Fifth, that the Office becomes the central point in providing information on what is happening in labour markets globally in terms of crisis responses. This work should be done in collaboration with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the World Bank.

Sixth, that "helpdesk/policy contact points", where governments, workers and employers can access information and guidance on what is happening in given policy areas across regions and sectors, are established across the Office.

Finally, that support for sustainable enterprise creation and development programmes are scaled up.

Change and reorientation need to be reflected in budget lines. This will entail that some issues are downgraded in importance, along with cuts from existing programmes, while others are strengthened. This information needs to be presented in operational terms to the Governing Body.

The Pact is, above all, grounded in areas of the ILO's mandate and competency and it reinforces the primacy of the ILO in labour market issues. It now lays out a framework for the ILO for the next four- to five-year period in assisting constituents.

Let me conclude now with a couple of comments. First, let the work begin. And finally,

(The speaker continues in Spanish.)

I would also like to express, in my own language, my deep gratitude, on behalf of the Employers, for our joint efforts.

We have very often worked together and we have supported the task that is incumbent on us as tripartite constituents but never, in such difficult times as we are experiencing today, have we felt so profoundly integrated into the discussion process.

I would like to thank the Chairperson of the Committee of the Whole, Ambassador Rapacki, for the way he has organized us, guided us and convinced us. I would like to thank my colleague and friend, Sir Roy Trotman, with whom our different points of view do not conceal the fact that we have got to strive for permanent dialogue, which we do.

I would like to thank our Reporter for her tireless efforts to capture in words what was, for our Drafting Group, very stressful. I would also like to thank our two leaders, the Worker, Ms Sharan Burrow, and the Employer, Mr Phil O'Reilly, from the Drafting Group.

And I would like to thank the Office and the Director-General. When things are done well, they have to be recognized in the same way as when we do have reservations and misgivings.

And thanks to you, President, because this Conference has created the Global Jobs Pact, which is going to make our economies, our well-being and our jobs grow.

Mr TROTMAN (*Worker, Barbados; Worker Vice-Chairperson of the Committee of the Whole on Crisis Responses*)

It seems as though, with the exclusion of a couple of paragraphs, Mr Funes de Rioja has delivered the speech for the Workers. Indeed, this has been indicative of the effort that they have been making over the past years, but particularly during this exercise, to ensure that there is an endeavour, to the extent possible, to reduce our sectoral and partisan positions and to find positions which we could say

are positions in favour of humanity. This includes some of the recommendations, which you have heard him put forward and which, together, we sought to put in the form of a resolution, which I hope to see brought before this august assembly eventually.

So, I think that, if I were to say nothing more, I could say that we endorse much of what has been said but, for the record, we still have to repeat some of those things which we have said more than once before, and which need to be repeated for the benefit of the records and also because, as good teachers, we are aware that, if a lesson is going to be learned, we cannot depend only on the single teaching of that lesson. Repetition goes to the heart of the understanding of the issue and the implementation of the issue.

When our Employer colleagues suggested, in March, that the agenda and format of the International Labour Conference be changed to include an in-depth response to the global crisis, we agreed with the idea but not on the format initially suggested, and that became the source of some concern for us.

However, I am happy to say that the unprecedented global crisis of the neo-liberal world economic order was recognized by us as requiring an urgent and decisive response from the ILO.

The authority of the International Labour Conference had to be used to address the global jobs crisis. At the same time, this work had to be carried out in accordance with the rules and procedures of the ILO and of the International Labour Conference itself. This is not a mere procedural question but is essential to maintain and protect the role of the International Labour Conference as a transparent, rules-bound and predictable tripartite forum for adopting international labour standards and policy regulations. And that was our concern and will always remain our concern, as I am sure it is the concern of the Employers and Governments as well.

In preparing for this extraordinary Committee of the Whole, more information should have been given so that all of us knew and understood the proposed working methods better. We spent many days in the dialogue forums but, regrettably, we needed more time to discuss, amend and improve the document.

The tripartite deliberation process is at the heart of the ILO's consensus-building mechanism and, to ensure strong ownership and commitment towards implementation of our decisions, the committees must have sufficient time and space for consultation and debate. Those of us who are anxious to return home may have thought that we had a very long exercise. The truth is that we did so much in so little time. We have heard several speakers from this platform, especially from the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards, make reference to the indecent hours that were forced upon us because there was not enough time for deliberation and consultation.

However, notwithstanding what I have said, I would like to thank everyone: the Employers and Governments alike, our own Chairperson and the Clerk of the Conference, for their support for the Global Jobs Pact, despite the limited time they had to engage in the discussion of the document.

At the Global Jobs Summit we heard many Heads of State endorsing the idea of a Global Jobs Pact and making strong suggestions as to how to reorgu-

late the global economy, how to control global financial markets, how to prevent another crisis and how to make sure that the costs of this crisis are not shifted to working people and their families.

Unfortunately, there was not sufficient time to incorporate the important ideas of President Kirchner, President Lula, President Sarkozy, Prime Minister Golding and the many other speakers at the Global Jobs Summit in the document.

Many Heads of State, Vice-Presidents and labour ministers endorsed the idea of a Global Jobs Pact. As Worker representatives, our group now wishes to have the ideas raised at the Summit incorporated into the Global Jobs Pact as part of the implementation programme. As Dr Funes has said, "let the action begin", and I think we are in agreement in this regard.

Despite the abovementioned limitations, we did a good job. In our Committee of the Whole and at the Global Jobs Summit, the world focused not only on the social and employment consequences of the crisis, but also discussed what is needed for a better future.

We are sending a message of vision, of change and realism to governments and to the women and men in the streets.

The Global Jobs Pact addresses the policy challenge of growing poverty, increasing unemployment, falling demand and declining purchasing power and puts full employment and decent work at the heart of the crisis responses. It outlines a number of priority areas, including international policy coherence and coordinated efforts to maintain and create employment. No single country can find solutions on its own. Coordination and global rules are therefore imperative. The Global Jobs Pact supports coordinated government measures, including expansionary macroeconomic stimulus packages to secure existing jobs and create new quality employment by investing in public services, infrastructure, health, education, social security and green jobs, and applying a wide range of active labour market policy instruments to respond to the job crisis, and the efficient regulation of financial markets and trade. Global financial markets need to be efficiently regulated to serve the real economy, finance real investment and generate employment. This will have to include a more stable exchange rate system, a prohibition of top financial products and offshore banking services, closure of tax havens and effective measures against all kinds of tax evasion. We thought that needed repeating, even here at the end.

Never again should speculators or banks be able to blackmail governments because they are too big to fail in their opinion.

Trade has to be regulated efficiently to avoid protectionism. But the trade rules have to take into account the varying development levels of countries in seeking to lift barriers to domestic and foreign markets.

Furthermore, it is necessary to maintain wage levels and guarantee a minimum wage. The global downward spiral in wages and working conditions must be stopped. To recover from the global crisis, we need a wage-led increased aggregate demand, social dialogue, collective bargaining and minimum wages need to be strengthened and decisively applied to maintain wage levels and prevent wage deflation.

The State has a particular responsibility to stabilize and protect wage levels by making investment

and procurement conditional on the full respect of working conditions and collective bargaining. Enforced minimum wages establish a wage floor, so that people can no longer be forced to accept starvation wages. Universal application of the ILO's minimum wage fixing Convention would be an important step to avoid a competitive race to the bottom.

In addition, we need the extension of social protocol to all. Social protection guards vulnerable people against poverty and stabilizes aggregate demand. It must be a key element of the recovery strategy. The extension of the duration and the coverage of unemployment benefits, including for temporary and non-regular workers, is an immediate part of the Pact's vision. Beyond the urgent need for improving unemployment provisions, the Global Jobs Pact calls for building a basic social protection floor for all, including access to health care and income security for the elderly and persons with disabilities. There need to be child benefits and income security, combined with public employment guarantee schemes for the unemployed and the working poor. The international community should provide development assistance and budgetary support in this respect.

It is time for solidarity to reach across national borders. Public employment guarantee schemes for the unemployed or for the working poor are a key policy instrument to ensure access to minimum wages for informal economy workers.

Furthermore, international labour standards should be applied. Respect for fundamental principles and rights at work is critical for human dignity. It is also critical to recovery and development. The ILO's international labour standards are international policy instruments and are the ILO's fine tools to coordinate and guide labour and social policies. They can prevent a downward spiral in labour conditions and support the recovery process.

The Global Jobs Pact underlines the specific value of the ILO's instruments concerning employment policy, wages, social security, the employment relationship, determination of employment, labour administration and inspection, migrant workers, labour conditions and public contracts, and occupational safety and health.

Furthermore, we need to reduce global imbalance and support development. After this crisis, the world must be different. It must be better. Recovery has to be wage led and must be a recovery that strengthens domestic demand in all countries. Trade can only be free if it is fair. Developing countries need to have the policy space to develop their own industrial base and the international community, including international financial institutions, has to make resources available for counter-cyclical action in countries facing fiscal and policy constraints.

Inequality within countries and between countries must be reduced substantially if we want to live in freedom and peace together on this planet. Today, the Global Jobs Pact is only a piece of paper. We, that is to say governments, workers and employers, have to make it a reality. This reality includes a commitment on the part of governments to social dialogue in strong labour market institutions. But, it also means that there should be no interference by employers when workers organize themselves and represent their interests collectively. All talk about social dialogue is cynical and empty if employers fire workers who stand up for their interests and

rights. Respect for collective bargaining and workers' rights is the litmus test of the Global Jobs Pact.

If we fail, society will lose. If we succeed, I am convinced that future historians will say that the ILO lived up to its mandate and the Global Jobs Pact marked a political turning point in the Great Recession of 2008–09.

Mr RAPACKI (*Government, Poland; Chairperson of the Committee of the Whole on Crisis Responses*)

The Committee of the Whole on Crisis Responses was invented just under three months ago as a way for this Conference to discuss and develop the Organization's crisis response. In that short time, the Director-General prepared his Report, expert speakers were contacted and confirmed for ten thematic dialogues – themselves a completely novel procedure for the Conference – and, over these busy two-and-a-half weeks, a comprehensive but tightly worded framework for future action was negotiated and agreed – a Global Jobs Pact. That is a rapid response!

In fact, of course, the origins of the Global Jobs Pact go further back. The November 2008 and March 2009 sessions of the Governing Body did important preparatory work. The framework for the Pact is the Decent Work Agenda, which we have been filling out for ten years now.

The vision for recovery in the Global Jobs Pact is a fair globalization, a phrase coined by the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, whose report we received five years ago, and which has helped us to place decent work prominently in the UN's international development strategy, including the Millennium Development Goals.

In April, the G20 asked us, working with other relevant organizations, to assess the actions taken and those required for the future. The Global Jobs Pact will help the Director-General greatly in meeting that request. And, most importantly, it is guided by commitments made by the ILO and its constituents in the 2008 Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization.

The ILO represents the world of work in all its diversity – diverse, yes, but unified by the simple everyday reality of most people's lives – earning a living. Or, rather, it should be an everyday reality of people's lives, because the crisis means that more and more women and men have no jobs. And the numbers who have work that is insufficiently productive to lead themselves and their families out of poverty is growing alarmingly. The absence of decent work is a personal and community crisis of huge proportions. We have to do all we can to give people everywhere, from Detroit to Tianjin, the chance to earn a decent living. This is what our Global Jobs Pact is about and there is no task more urgent in the world today.

Stopping the rise in unemployment is the first task but, as the title of the Global Jobs Pact says, we are focusing on recovering from the crisis, and shaping a new global open-market economy which is fairer, cleaner and more stable. In the globalization of the last ten years or so, somehow, we allowed finance to become the master of the real economy. And a cruel and arbitrary master it has proved to be. The new globalization which we hope to have a hand in creating must make finance the servant of sustainable enterprises and decent work.

Looking to the future that starts tomorrow, or at least on Monday morning, we all – governments,

employers' and workers' organizations, and the Office – must make maximum use of the Global Jobs Pact. I think, we have a text which company managers and local union representatives can read, feel that somebody at the global level is working for them, and draw inspiration from, as they seek solutions to the day-to-day problems they are facing.

I think, Presidents, Prime Ministers, ministers, government officials and parliamentarians have in the Pact a useful agenda of relevant and practical policies – one that, if applied, will help us in ensuring that the world after the crisis is different from the world before it.

And, as an ambassador working in the multilateral system, I can say that this text will be very useful in shaping the coordinated global recovery measures we need. Our outcome document is global and it is focused on jobs. And we have named it a Pact. Our Pact is a commitment to each other to act together for the common goal of a decent work exit from this crisis. Let us not forget the solemn promise we are making to each other today because I am sure there will be hard times ahead before we can say that we have overcome the jobs crisis. But we can do it! If I may use a phrase coined by César Chávez, the leader of the migrant farm workers in America, and now even more well-known in another language: *¡Sí, se puede!*

In conclusion, may I thank most sincerely my fellow officers, Mr Daniel Funes de Rioja for the Employers, Sir Roy Trotman for the Workers, and Ms Iris Dembsher, our Reporter. Let me also thank the spokespersons for the Employers and Workers in the Drafting Group, Mr Phil O'Reilly and Ms Sharan Burrow, and indeed all the members of the Drafting Group.

All the members of the Committee of the Whole, or the "Cows" as we proudly call ourselves, were tremendous. The spirit of collaborative endeavour was very strong, even in moments of tension. We all realized that we were doing important work, which, in troubled times, could make a real difference to the lives of women and men and their families all over the world.

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General of the Conference for the team of Office staff he made available to the Committee. Led by Mr José-Manuel Salazar, they remained helpful and good humoured, at least in public, through two-and-a-half arduous weeks. It was an outstanding effort, both from those who displayed their expertise in full view of the Committee and those we never met because they did the night shift to prepare us for the next morning.

I know the Office does this every year, and our Committee was only a little bit exceptional, but it does the ILO great credit to be able to run a complicated show like this with such efficiency.

I would like to thank the President for the privilege and honour of being asked to chair this Committee. May I formally move the adoption of the report and its accompanying resolution: "Recovering from the crisis: A Global Jobs Pact".

Mr NAKAJIMA (*Worker, Japan*)

I am particularly interested in taking part of this discussion on behalf of the Workers' group, as it is my hope that tackling the global employment crisis through the Global Jobs Pact will empower the ILO's Decent Work Agenda.

It has been said that job security and social protection are the key to recovery from the crisis, which has affected millions of people regardless of their country's stage of development. I would like to highlight the importance of the rapid implementation of concrete employment measures and the need for adequate training schemes. These measures should be accompanied by effective and properly targeted labour policies, focused especially on the most vulnerable groups.

Investing in workers' skills development and vocational training and retraining is a means of avoiding further risks and of securing a living for those who participate in the training.

Allow me to insist on the importance of adequate social protection schemes. Every country should make the utmost effort to protect workers and the people in general, especially unemployed youths, first-time jobseekers, temporary and non-regular workers, all of whom are suffering from the instability of the world economy. Extending the duration and coverage of the social protection schemes must be strongly encouraged.

In conclusion, I urge the ILO's constituents to implement the Global Jobs Pact through tripartite participation, by promoting active labour policies so as to achieve our objectives.

Ms DEL RIO (*Worker, Italy*)

I would like to stress our support for the Global Jobs Pact that has been negotiated by governments, employers and trade unions. It is important to underline the value of this tripartite consensus because we are all committed now to the effective implementation of this text, both at national and international levels.

Together, we share the view that the rise in unemployment, which has resulted from the financial and economic crisis, is an obstacle to recovery. We need coordinated measures to restore growth in demand and halt the rise in unemployment as quickly as possible. Measures have to be targeted to be fast acting, have the maximum impact on jobs, protect those most at risk and help move to a green and productive economy. More expenditure is required, particularly on active labour market policies that can foster the creation of decent and skilled jobs, and help firms keep workers in jobs.

We also commit to ensuring that emerging and developing countries have the resources and policies in place to be able to adopt the necessary recovery measures.

Now we need to ensure that the Global Jobs Pact is effectively implemented at national and international levels and not restricted to ILO activity only.

In the next months, important international events will be held where this document can be supported. Italy has the presidency of the G8 this year. Already at the G8 Social Summit in March, attention was given to the discussion at the ILO on the Global Jobs Pact. Now we have the instrument – an agreed instrument. The social partners of the G8 countries are going to meet the Italian Prime Minister next week and we will urge a clear commitment of the G8 to be reflected in the final communiqué to be issued at the G8 Summit in July.

It is a first step to build an effective follow-up to this document. Then, we have other important international appointments: the G20, the United Nations General Assembly and the WTO Ministerial Conference this year. We hope that governments

and social partners who supported the Global Jobs Pact here, and those governments who are going to have a leading role in these meetings, will take consistent actions at all forums to implement the Pact.

Original French: Mr GUIRO (Worker, Senegal)

We are all in agreement in stating that the global crisis requires global solutions and that decent work has to be at the heart of all recovery strategies. These recovery strategies have to be bolstered by solidarity with the poorest and most deprived people on our planet, in order to reduce the gaps that exist between nations and within nations.

The Global Jobs Pact, which places an emphasis on decent work, has, as we see it, to be reflected in action taken at the international level. This action has to be taken by States, yes, but also by multilateral institutions, which must make available the financial resources to make what we have in this Pact a reality.

We are delighted to be able to submit today to this Conference the Global Jobs Pact, which truly responds to the challenges that we have to face today. It is a Pact which, if it is truly implemented, has real potential. It can truly mitigate the adverse effects of the crisis on workers throughout the world.

As Africa sees it, this crisis poses a number of challenges to us and comes on top of an existing crisis – the food and energy crisis and, of course, the debt burden. With unemployment and underemployment very high, many workers are in a very precarious position indeed, with a large number of them in the informal economy. This Global Jobs Pact, which we support, can therefore also help us to confront these challenges in the long term.

I would also like to draw your attention to paragraph 22, which prioritizes the generation of decent work opportunities with multidimensional programmes to realize decent work and development in the least developed countries. We eagerly await implementation of such programmes.

In Africa, we have to change our development model. We have to diversify our economies; we have to expand our regional markets; and we have to invest in a process of industrialization in order to get us out of poverty and dependence on the markets of industrialized nations.

The Global Jobs Pact recognizes the importance of industrialization and diversification, and we must now make use of this Pact to enable us to build a future for ourselves and our children.

Original Spanish: Mr PEREZ (Worker, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela)

For us workers, the conclusions to the last, nearly 20 days of work throw up a set of questions which are not featured anywhere in the report.

First, why does not the report say that financial entities, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), have a great degree of responsibility for the crisis in which we are now plunged?

Second, why do the conclusions not propose greater openness so that all countries, not just the G8 or the G20, have the opportunity to discuss what is a problem for the whole of humanity? These financial entities should be asking for forgiveness from humanity for the crisis in which we now find ourselves.

Further, looking at the conclusions, we see that, once again, the workers and their families are going

to bear the burden of the crisis, as it is proposed that a job might be divided into part-time work – four hours for one worker, four hours for another – and that their benefits and social security be likewise divided, and that States will be responsible for paying their whole wages. This needs to be examined. Those who are to blame must face up to their responsibilities.

In the world today, there are more than 50 million unemployed people and more than 10 million children dying of hunger. For these reasons, we think that, when we talk about sustainable enterprises, we should mean that sustainable enterprises – with the processes of production and the added value, as well as the benefits of that added value – should participate in social dialogue; the benefits of this added value should be invested in the community or social or environmental recovery programmes. These matters should be discussed here in the conclusions.

Furthermore, capitalism and the market economy do not represent the only economic model. There are other experiments that have been carried out, for example those taking place in some developing countries where abandoned companies have been rescued by the workers themselves, and have returned to being productive. As a result, the workers and their families have security once again, and we believe that these experiences should have been taken into account.

The document also talks about freezing minimum wages or, in particular, establishing that the minimum wage can be moved, always taking deflation into account, which means that my purchasing power will not help me during the recovery process.

This is why we think that a new economic model is possible, where workers and society are all correctly and fairly involved and there is a better distribution of wealth, because work is what generates that wealth. This is why we think that workers have the right to enjoy, with their families, the benefits of this added value.

Original Spanish: Mr ARIAS (Government, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela)

My Government would like to congratulate the Committee on the efforts that it has made in the conclusions of this discussion. I would also like to congratulate the Director-General, Juan Somavia, who responded to a call from many countries to deal with the subject of the crisis. If I remember rightly, it has been barely a year since we started considering this matter and, recently, only three months ago, we asked the Director-General to incorporate this subject, and he has done so commendably. We would therefore like to express our thanks to him, to the President and to the whole team who have been working on this discussion, and in particular to the Office.

My Government has some further comments to make with regard to the Global Jobs Pact. We recognize the good intentions behind the proposal and the efforts that have gone into it. As I have said, we encouraged the Organization to hold this discussion, in its capacity as the only tripartite forum in the world whose objective is to promote decent work and social justice. However, we do have some problems with the document. As we have said all along, in order to find a way out of the crisis, we need to re-establish confidence and we cannot do that with-

out determining the real causes of the crisis and who is responsible.

There is an ethical debate that we have avoided. I understand that those responsible or who have some responsibility for the present situation do not wish to get into such a discussion, but for us it is an extremely important matter because, before the present crisis came along, we were already in a crisis. We cannot propose a recovery that will simply take us back to the beginning because, at the beginning of this crisis, there were already problems. It is not just a matter of the ethical dimension of the document on globalization published by this Organization. In even more dramatic figures, the former United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Jean Ziegler, highlighted that a child under 10 dies every five seconds from hunger or malnutrition-related causes, which is equivalent to murder: a murder carried out by the system. We cannot aim towards maintaining that reality through our work. We must undertake a serious revision of the international financial institutions, the dictatorship of the dollar, and the rules that govern the international financial markets. If we do not, we will not get to the fundamental cause of the crisis and, as a result, the crisis will return sooner rather than later.

I therefore repeat my thanks for the efforts that have been made but, in our opinion, the Global Jobs Pact does not go far enough.

Original Spanish: Mr SALDAÑA (Worker, Peru)

First of all, I would like to congratulate the various groups for this final report, which gives the green light for going ahead with this vital project – the Global Jobs Pact.

I would just like to add to that, as an Inca country with the Amazon running through it, which gives life to the whole South American continent, our country should be considered as a participant in the many tasks which lie before us.

We have said that workers are entitled to a job in the formal sector and – although this seems like a dream and will be very difficult to bring about – we must ensure this becomes a reality. We hope that the International Labour Organization gives its full support to these efforts.

The problem of social security for all workers is also a major challenge. Throughout the world, and particularly in our country, social security rights are gradually being eroded and workers are not having access to the health care they need.

Certain speakers have alluded to a minimum universal wage. But it was considered that this was not the opportune moment to examine it. I believe that the world wants a universal minimum wage, taking into consideration our various currencies, which would allow us to live as human beings.

I call upon employers throughout the world not to dismiss workers in an arbitrary fashion because they only add to the massive unemployment.

Members of the International Labour Organization, let us not forget the unemployed because, in the next 20 years, technology will increase in leaps and bounds and there will be even more people looking for work. Indeed, the present number may be multiplied by three in the future and we shall have a world of unemployed.

The International Labour Organization will probably have to add another letter to its acronym, becoming the ILOU – the International Labour Or-

ganization for the Unemployed. Our efforts must therefore be concentrated upon the unemployed.

Mr MONANI MAGAYA (*Minister of Labour, Public Service and Human Resources Development, Sudan*)

The delegation of the Government of Sudan endorses this Pact. We think that it is very comprehensive as a result of the participation of the partners in the Conference, as well as the Heads of State, Prime Ministers and Vice-Presidents who came to participate. We thank the ILO for inviting them to participate with us.

The ideas which came out during this Conference, and which have been embodied in this Pact, have been very useful to us. We now understand very well the reasons, the people, and the institutions, behind the crisis.

We also understand that, after overcoming the present problem, the world cannot remain the same – we cannot go about our business as usual. We will have to do it differently.

I think the recommendations made in the Pact will be very useful to national governments, in order for them to come up with the paragraphs which will help to mitigate the crisis in their countries.

We, in Sudan, will also work together with the partners and other stakeholders to come up with a programme that will help us overcome the effect of this crisis on our country with two packages, one of which is intended for southern Sudan.

We think that the ILO has done a good job and that this has been a very historic Conference for all of us – historic because we discussed a very important issue – that of this crisis we are living through.

It is also historic because of the way it has been conducted, which was different from previous conferences.

We thank the ILO Director-General for this work. We thank the Governing Body for coming up with this idea during their last meeting in March, and their insistence that we should include it in this year's Conference, at a time when we are actually assessing the crisis. Now that we have come up with this package, we thank them also for that.

We thank all those who have contributed to it and we hope that, when we emerge from this present crisis, we must not do business as usual. We must be doing something different to protect workers and to ensure that we provide jobs for our youth, and that we minimize the effect of gases in the environment for the benefit of our people in the whole world.

Mr AKE (*Government, Nigeria*)

Mr President, I would like to congratulate you and the Vice-Chairpersons, the Secretary-General, and every member of the Committee of the Whole, for a very hard-to-produce Global Jobs Pact.

This Pact, we believe, will provide a policy road map for the ILO's crisis response to the jobs issue in respect of decent work, as we exit out of the current crisis, and towards the achievement of its recovery.

The Pact calls for collaborative efforts from the multilateral system and the delivery of country-level support for those countries wishing to optimize job opportunities under fair and coordinated conditions.

Nigeria strongly supports this Pact and looks forward to adopting these tenets to legislative action to give effect to it.

We believe in the effectiveness of this Pact and will use it to spread its gospel in the subregion.

We want to thank you and give our blessing.

The PRESIDENT

I now propose that we proceed to the approval of the report of the Committee of the Whole on Crisis Responses, paragraphs 1–310, as contained in *Provisional Record* No. 19. May I take it that the Conference approves this report?

(The report, paragraphs 1–310, is approved.)

**RESOLUTION: “RECOVERING FROM THE CRISIS:
A GLOBAL JOBS PACT”: ADOPTION**

The PRESIDENT

We shall now move to the adoption of the resolution: “Recovering from the crisis: A Global Jobs Pact”, the text of which is set out in *Provisional Record* No. 19A.

If there are no objections, may I take it that the Conference adopts this resolution?

(The resolution is adopted.)

Before moving on, I should like to pay tribute to all who were involved in this extraordinary exercise. I wish to congratulate the Committee of the Whole on the spirit of cooperation that prevailed throughout the negotiations, even when they were difficult and lasted late into the night. The result is a document that provides a strong, clear statement of the ILO's position regarding the current global financial and economic crisis. It is an outcome which shows that this Organization is at once respected and vibrant, and capable of responding rapidly when it is required.

The Officers and members of the Committee, and all the secretariat staff involved in the Committee's work, deserve our thanks and congratulations.

The Conference is now invited to view a video message recorded for us from the United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon.

(A video recording of the message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations was shown.)

Mr BAN KI-MOON (*United Nations Secretary-General*)

It is a privilege to take part in this closing session of the International Labour Conference during this, the ILO's 90th anniversary year.

I congratulate my friend, Director-General Juan Somavia, on his new mandate and look forward to his continued leadership. Mr Somavia has kept me informed on the work of your Conference which comes at such a critical time. Economies are suffering; anxieties are rising; people are increasingly stressed. The challenge is clear, as the Director-General said at the start of this Conference; we must help workers, families and enterprises weather the crisis and build the foundations of a decent work path to recovery and sustainable growth.

At this Conference you have made an essential contribution. You have put the focus on employment-centred recovery. You have mobilized world leaders to share their experiences and commit to action, and you have emerged with the Global Jobs Pact.

When I addressed your Governing Body last November, I encouraged the ILO to expand its contribution to confronting the crisis. You have met that challenge. The Global Jobs Pact responds directly to

the everyday worries of working women and men. It speaks to the concerns of enterprises, large and small. It addresses the hopes of young people seeking opportunity as they enter this turbulent market.

In just a few days, the United Nations General Assembly will convene the Summit on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and its Impact on Development. That will be followed by the G8 Summit in Italy next month. I will be there, and I can assure you that I shall convey the message of the Global Jobs Pact. I will carry it with me, just as the Pact carries with it the hearts and hopes of people around the world.

This Pact is the fruit of our joint efforts and we shall work to maximize its potential throughout the United Nations system, including through the United Nations Chief Executives Board (CEB) and the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

Once again, thank you for keeping the focus where it needs to be – on decent work, a fair globalization and sustainable growth for all. Keep working for social justice. Congratulations once again on a landmark Conference.

The PRESIDENT

On behalf of the Conference, I should like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon for that message of solidarity.

The Global Jobs Pact is indeed a pact for the entire multilateral system, for all governments and for all people of the world. As Secretary-General said, it puts the focus where it needs to be, on decent work, a fair globalization and sustainable growth for all.

The Conference is deeply grateful for the Secretary-General's assurance that he will endeavour to maximize the potential of the Pact throughout the multilateral system.

CLOSING SPEECHES

The PRESIDENT

That now brings us to the very last part of our work – the closing ceremony.

Original Arabic: Mr ALLAM (Employer Vice-President of the Conference)

It is a great honour for me to be here in my capacity as Employer Vice-President of the Conference, representing the Employers at this landmark event at a crucial point in our history, when we are living through a global financial and economic crisis. It is an honour to speak both from the podium and in the Committee meetings that make up this Conference.

It has been a wonderful opportunity to have a chance to review the global situation and to focus in particular on employment issues at the global level and on the consequences of the global financial and economic crisis as they are felt throughout the world.

I have greatly appreciated the opportunity to participate in discussions on a number of topics, including the plight of those living in the occupied Arab territories and the problems faced by employers and workers there.

We all very much hope that the global economic crisis will soon come to an end, that the world economy will recover and that the situation for employers and workers in the occupied Arab territories will improve.

I have participated in a number of sessions of the Conference in recent years and it is possible to

achieve things that might otherwise seem to be impossible. The ILO Governing Body will, I am sure, take due note of the outcome of the Conference and of the constructive spirit that has prevailed throughout. That spirit has once again demonstrated that the ILO is the ideal forum for the hopes and dreams of the tripartite constituents to be put into practice.

Of particular importance is the Global Jobs Pact that we have just adopted. We have talked here about emerging from the crisis through employment, and that is the message we are going to take with us back to our countries. That is the watchword that we are going to abide by in our national dialogues.

We are going to discuss employment policies and labour policies with that in mind. We are going to follow the path laid down by the ILO and pursue policies outlined here in our own countries. Thus, once we emerge from the crisis, we shall be stronger than before and in a healthier condition. But more than words, we must now look to action. We have to roll up our sleeves and get down to work. We have to start using all the tools that are available to us.

We know that a great deal of very valuable work has been done by experts who have a lot of expertise in this area and we now have to use the tools they have given us to dig ourselves out of this trouble.

It is technical work that we have to get down to, while recognizing that a great deal of important work has been already done, especially in the Committee of the Whole, which has brought its expertise to bear on the issue and done an outstanding job.

Remarkable achievements were made in the other committees too, such as the Committee on Gender Equality and the Committee on HIV/AIDS. The discussions that took place in those committees were very objective and constructive.

Once again then, this only confirms the importance of this kind of dialogue involving all the social partners and all of the tripartite constituents. We believe that the Committee on the Application of Standards worked extremely well again this year, and we very much hope that the appeals launched by our Organization are heeded, and that the obligations entered into are fully respected throughout the world.

In conclusion, I would like to thank everyone who has made this Conference possible, especially the committee members and the highly competent secretariat for their invaluable help. Special thanks go to all the team that assisted me, including the interpreters who made it possible for us to understand ourselves during this Conference.

Mr ZELHOEFER (*Worker Vice-President of the Conference*)

It has been a great pleasure and honour for me and my organization, the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, to be elected Vice-President of this 98th Session of the International Labour Conference. I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Workers' delegates for the trust they placed in me. I would also like to congratulate the President of the Conference, Mr Hossain; the Government Vice-President, Mr Palma Caicedo; and the Employer Vice-President, Mr Allam; for their excellent and fruitful cooperation. With the skilful help of the secretariat, we all worked together very productively.

I was also particularly honoured to serve at a Conference that was addressed by a record number of Heads of State, which shows a commitment of world leaders to work together to overcome the current crisis. As we all know, this Conference was held at a historic juncture, with workers everywhere facing such serious employment and social challenges due to an unprecedented and devastating financial and economic crisis. This has required an urgent and comprehensive response from all constituents. We can all be rightfully proud that we were able to present to the world a Global Jobs Pact, providing us all with an essential policy framework and tools to respond to the crisis.

I will start by welcoming the adoption of the programme and budget, including the support of the Government of the United States, for the next biennium, and hope that the financial resources allocated will enable us to implement our important programmes and meet the emerging challenges.

The Committee of the Whole on Crisis Responses was particularly timely in addressing the most urgent challenges that we are facing today. Workers in particular are deeply affected by the crisis, losing jobs, savings and pensions, with many workers falling back or deeper into poverty. The sense of urgency in the Committee led to the adoption of a historic Global Jobs Pact. Let us make this Pact work for all. It provides for a crisis response policy package that is timely, comprehensive and ambitious. It addresses not only the immediate challenges, but will also lay the foundations for a fair globalization, prosperity and social justice for all – a globalization that raises all boats, not just the few.

I would like to reiterate the key elements of the Pact, which include:

- a globally coordinated policy response to achieve decent work based upon the social justice Declaration;
- regulation of the global financial markets to ensure that they serve the real economy;
- creating quality employment through investment in public services and infrastructure;
- providing an enabling environment for job creation through sustainable enterprises, cooperatives and the wider social economy;
- increasing global aggregate demand through a wage-led recovery;
- a durable and enduring commitment by employers and workers to collective bargaining;
- a proactive role of governments as employer, procurer and regulator to respect and promote collective bargaining and social dialogue;
- building adequate social protection for all that, as a first priority, aims at providing a universal basic social protection floor;
- creating a global trade and development paradigm that gives developing countries the policy, fiscal and legal space to build their own diversified industrial base; and
- making use of the strongest asset of the ILO – its comprehensive body of international labour standards, including its fundamental principles and rights at work, to coordinate policies and not only avoid a race to the bottom but also to build a base to raise the level of human dignity in work for all.

We now need mechanisms to make sure that this Pact becomes a reality and is widely and successfully used and implemented by the ILO's constituents and other international organizations.

The Committee on the Application of Standards took place within the broader context of the economic crisis. There is real concern about its negative impact on the respect for workers' rights and labour standards, as was also highlighted in the other committees. The general discussion focused on the very role of standards in development strategies and, in particular, on the importance and relevance of fundamental principles and rights at work, protection of wages, and standards related to employment and social protection to get out of the crisis.

With respect to the specific cases, I regret that, yet again, the issue of comfort women in Japan has not been dealt with in the Committee. I also have to draw attention to the many cases of violations of and lack of respect for Conventions Nos 87 and 98 on freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining. These two Conventions are not only the enabling ones and keys, but they are also all the more important if we are to build a tripartite consensus and respond effectively to the crisis and the challenges we face together today and in the future.

Although the results of the discussions were generally welcomed by the Workers, I regret to note the failure to reach agreement on the special paragraphs for Guatemala and Costa Rica, or to agree on a mission to Peru. I would also like to make specific reference to the special sitting on Burma/Myanmar on Conventions Nos 29 and 87 and the unfortunate attack against the Workers' delegate from Burma/Myanmar.

I very much welcome the conclusions and the very hard and commendable work done in the Committee on Gender Equality. The discussions made clear that we are still way too far from reaching gender equality. More efforts and different approaches need to be explored and used to address these inequalities, particularly in employment and the pay gap between men and women. Also, more proactive support and enabling conditions are needed if we are to make progress. There is a key role for international labour standards in achieving gender equality. The Committee also concluded that, particularly in times of crisis, women are hit hard and that progress made over many years can quickly be lost. This has to be prevented. The crisis response needs to address the particular situation of women, which is different from that of men. Most important is the need to adopt a long-term perspective ensuring that all the immediate responses pave the way for attaining enduring gender equality. A lot remains to be done. I hope that the crisis responses will be used to mainstream gender into the different measures and to put gender equality at the heart of the decent work responses.

The Committee on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work concluded its first part of a two-year discussion on an international standard to combat HIV/AIDS as a transnational, universal threat to the human race. This should be a strong instrument and I would like to reiterate that the Workers have a very strong preference for a Convention. I am disappointed about the many escape routes used by governments to avoid binding provisions and the resources that would translate the political statements into concrete commitments. However, I am encouraged to see that there is good language on occupational safety and health and important references to the protection of privacy and measures to combat discrimination. Nevertheless, I very much

regret that important protection measures for migrants, such as the prohibition of testing on arrival, were not included. The text also remains far too weak on maternity protection. Some of these issues will need further discussion next year, including those related to the disclosure of HIV status for occupational safety reasons, and the issues of protection of workers and anti-discrimination. I look forward to seeing much stronger language in the instrument.

The Global Report on forced labour, *The cost of coercion*, shows an alarming 12.3 million people still in slavery, bonded labour, human trafficking and other forms of forced labour. It is deplorable that some forms of forced labour, such as bonded labour, slave labour, prison labour and compulsory labour in public and other services and export processing zones continue to exist, and were not sufficiently addressed in the Report. The Workers' group endorsed the broad outline of the proposed action plan but called for additional measures to be taken, including addressing some of the root causes of forced labour and helping constituents to build their capacities to fight forced labour. I must express concern about the impacts of the crisis and the risk of more people falling into various forms of forced labour. Finally, I wish to clearly underscore that Workers have been adamantly against forced labour in any form and will continue to fight against it.

I conclude with the hope that the Global Jobs Pact will live up to its expectations and call upon all of us to make its implementation a reality. The crisis is the biggest challenge now ahead of us.

Let me finally thank the Director-General, the ILO staff and the interpreters, who worked tirelessly to ensure the success of this Conference. I thank you for your attention at this historic Conference and wish you all a safe trip back home and that our work will continue tomorrow, into the coming months and the years ahead. Ambassador Rapacki quoted César Chávez. I would like to take the opportunity to quote American Senator Robert Francis Kennedy who once said: "There are those who look at things the way they are, and ask why? I dream of things that never were, and ask why not?"

Original Spanish: Mr PALMA CAICEDO (Government Vice-President of the Conference)

Our work has come to an end and, in a few hours' time, we shall all be returning home to our respective countries to resume our day-to-day work, some of us as trade union leaders, others as heads of employers' associations and others, like myself, as leaders of policies and programmes at the government level.

Our debates have been intense, passionate and fascinating. We have shared our ideas and opinions and our most illustrious visions of reality. We have heard the brilliant speeches made by the various speakers and participants in this Conference, which have been most enriching for us. We have also had the unique privilege of listening to illustrious guest speakers and worldwide leaders, who shared with us their experience as statespersons and made enlightened and interesting contributions that have helped us gain a better understanding of this unprecedented global crisis which is affecting millions of people throughout the world, highlighting the disastrous effects of a system which, until recently, we thought was infallible.

More than a century ago, Europe started to talk about social issues, as a result of the excessive and dehumanizing nature of industrialization and the laissez-faire approach. There was also talk about the shift from a guardian State to a society where the State played only a passive role, where markets were the only regulator of socio-economic life and where labour was considered to be a simple commodity or product, the value of which was dependent on the fluctuations of supply and demand in the market.

Because of this, there are still misconceptions about the labour market today. Although the developments made within the industrialized world, and the neo-liberal ideas that brought it ideological support, marked a step forward, compared to the slavery and servitude that we had had before, it became clear soon afterwards that the benefits of this progress would not be reaped by the vast majority.

Those affected started to confront this cruel reality and new ideas and a new order emerged. There began to be talk of social rights, including the right to work and in particular the right to social protection. There was also talk about the need to eliminate inequalities in social and economic conditions among the different factors of production.

So, 90 years ago, the ILO was born; it was an agency of the former League of Nations and was established under the Treaty of Versailles at the end of the First World War. One of its first declarations was to condemn the idea of labour being a commodity and to stress the need to restore the human dimension of labour.

Since then, the ILO, which is a unique body within the United Nations system, given its tripartite character, has had a long history of adopting Conventions and other instruments which have been incorporated into the national legislation and the Constitutions of all of our countries.

Today, we are faced with a new global crisis which, as we have heard repeatedly over the course of this session, started as a financial crisis and has become a structural one. We are now faced with new social issues caused, among other things, by an economic and political model which has failed by allowing exaggerated market dictatorship, deregulation and job instability, which has not only led to precarious working conditions, but has also made it impossible to create new or maintain existing jobs.

Today we are faced with a challenge. We have got to find and implement new ideas so that we can tackle and mitigate the effects of this crisis; explore all means and creative possibilities to create a new society on the basis of decent and productive work and reintroduce the notion of social justice and its principles; and discuss and adopt a Global Jobs Pact for decent work and local pacts that should be crafted within the tripartite context.

I am convinced that this session of the Conference, which has been one of the most successful and important in the history of the ILO, has in fact taken place at a very important time, as was the case 90 years ago. So, now it is time to take action on these excellent initiatives to tackle these problems together.

Now is not the time to complain. We are going through turbulent times and we have all got to pull together to weather the crisis. I would like to stress the key role of the ILO in these difficult times. The ILO has not grown old. On the contrary, now would be a very good time for it to revitalize and rejuvenate.

nate. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Director-General, the Officers of the Conference, the President of the Conference, my fellow Vice-Presidents, the technical staff, the Office and Ms Althea Wright-Byll. I am honoured to have shared this responsibility with such capable people; together, we have made a wonderful team. In fact, we almost worked perfectly, just like a Swiss watch – almost!

I would also like to thank the regional coordinators and the members of the various committees, the distinguished Government delegates, the Workers and the Employers. To conclude, let me say that change is possible. A new, ethical, tolerant world is possible. A new society is possible. Let us work and struggle together for this new society – a society of labour. As our former leader Eloy Alfaro used to say, “the darkest hour is just before dawn”. Let us hope that the dawn will break at last over all our peoples. I offer you warm wishes from my country and from its President.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE

Dear friends, let me thank you enormously for what you have done at this Conference. This is certainly an extraordinarily successful moment in the history of the ILO, and it has been produced by all of you.

Mr President, you have chaired a magnificent Conference. Thank you so much. With a strong voice and a gentle manner, you have certainly made your presence felt. Thank you very, very much.

My thanks also go to the Vice-Presidents who have been supporting his work and for your three interventions today. You have each highlighted different perspectives in a very complementary manner, because you are from different groups, and you have all also reinforced the ILO with what you said. Thank you so much, all three of you.

Let me refer to the overall work of the Conference.

Concerning the Committee on Gender Equality, certainly we need to continue to make progress; we need to keep our foot on the accelerator, whether in regard to pay gaps, discrimination or other dimensions. But, what I bring out of that discussion is the clear linkage we have to make between gender equality and the Global Jobs Pact: when implementing the Pact, we need to bear this in mind constantly as guidance in each of the areas that we have highlighted as a source of consensus.

Let me also say that the percentage of women participating in the Conference – which, as all of you know, is a permanent theme that I bring up – went up from 25 per cent last year to 28.5 per cent this year, and I would certainly invite you to continue increasing it. Why not set the target of 35 per cent for next year – would that be all right for you? Go ahead and do it! (Some of my friends are laughing here. Do not laugh, it is going to happen!)

On HIV/AIDS, I think that the preparations you have made are excellent. But differences persist, and I think that we certainly have to prepare ourselves to have a strong outcome next year. This issue, as presented by the Officers of the Committee, certainly is a universal issue that touches the essence of our moral capacity to respond to these types of situation. I would very much stimulate you to prepare for very strong results next year. Thank you for what you have already done.

On the Committee on the Application of Standards, I think that, as you know, this is a key function in this process of peer review that we have every year, and it is a key element in our supervisory machinery. I also think that we have to make sure that the deliberations are carried out in a spirit of mutual respect among all the participants.

Let me also say that this is the year in which we celebrated the tenth anniversary of Convention No. 182 on the worst forms of child labour. I said at the beginning of the Conference, and on the World Day against Child Labour, and let me say it again: we are only 14 ratifications short. I know that ratification does not mean that things change from one day to the next but, if we were able to achieve universal ratification of the Convention in a reasonable period of time, it would be such an incredible political message. More than that, it would convey the essence of the values that we espouse. So I would invite those countries that have not yet done so to ratify it – I know that there may be problems; sometimes you have to look at legislation, and it is not always lack of political will – but why not try it? Why not go out and decide that you want to do it as a priority, so that we will be able to say one day at this Conference that Convention No. 182 has universal ratification? I truly invite you to do that.

Our programme and budget was approved, with 98 per cent of the votes in favour! Those of you who have been here for some years know that reaching that level of positive votes has not been easy in the past. We have reached it at this Conference. It may be symbolic of what was going to happen at the Conference – and I certainly want to thank all of the countries that felt that it was within their possibilities to move forward and to accept a vote favourably – to have a budget that has the highest level of support that we have had in many, many, many years. To all of those who came on board on this budget voting possibility, thank you very much. I think it is very, very important.

You saw my Report on Palestine. I said at the beginning that the situation continues to be intolerable for many people. Let us hope that, in today’s international context, we will move forward, that we will see an independent Palestinian State emerge. But I have to say that, as conditions stand, this is a very, very complicated issue, and I believe that it is very important that we produce this yearly report for you to consider and analyse.

The same is true of the Report that I prepared on forced labour. I think that these conditions in the world are simply not acceptable. Our function is to put the issue before you, in order for you to decide how and in what way you want to move forward on these issues.

I am mentioning all of these different items because, behind each of your discussions on these issues, there were ILO staff working in front of you, working beside you, working behind you and working at night while you were sleeping. Permit me to thank them all: Paulo Barcia, Althea Wright-Byll, Ricardo Hernández Pulido, the great team of interpreters, the great team of translators that we have, all the staff managing documents, the technical staff behind each one of the committees, all the staff working in the secretariats of the committees and, in particular, PROTOCOL and Terry Powell and her team. As I mentioned the other day at the Summit, the fact is that an absolutely essential dimension of the success of the Summit is to get the protocol

right! If you do not get the protocol right when dealing with Presidents and very high authorities, things can become very complicated. I want to thank Terry Powell especially for handling that extremely well.

Permit me also to thank my Cabinet – the people who work most closely with me, headed by María Angélica Ducci, and all the team, who, of course, play a very fundamental role as the support team with which I work. I also want to thank my personal assistant, May Ontal.

Excuse me for taking so long talking about ILO staff, but I truly feel that, when we have this real commitment of so many people to make sure that what you need is there the next morning, that the translations are on time, that the document is available, I think it is my responsibility to highlight it and to thank you, because I know perfectly well that you, in your hearts, know the enormous amount of work that is behind it. Thank you so much for that.

Let me come to the Global Jobs Pact. At the beginning of this Conference, I think that we all felt that we were being tested by history, that we had taken the decision to address this question; we did not know how it was going to come out and, obviously, we were dealing with a special issue. Last year, we also made history. We adopted the Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, but it was very much an internal exercise of the ILO, a decision on the part of the ILO to give ourselves guidance on the direction in which we wanted to go and the internal changes that were needed in the house and in the whole management of our structure. We gave ourselves a value system and a direction.

But we did not have the Secretary-General attentive to what we were doing. What we have done now is something that the world has been looking at and that the world is going to be using. So it is a very, very different matter from last year. We are making history with both of these instruments, but obviously the implications of this one are extremely important.

Our Reporter, who did such a wonderful job and made such a beautiful presentation of that work, said something extremely important. She said that this is the first global policy instrument that has been agreed upon to confront the crisis. And it is true! Of course, we have the G20. There is going to be a meeting of the United Nations. There have been meetings elsewhere. But the global agreement on how to confront the crisis, with a number of specifications of what can be done, without it being a “one-size-fits-all” solution – this is truly the first time that it has been done.

So it is a contribution to discussions that are already there – the discussion on what to do with the financial system, on the stimulus packages, but we are giving a direction. We are saying, look, whichever of these things you do, please listen to this first agreement on a policy approach to the crisis. Why? Well, because it happens to come from the real actors of the economy. It may be symbolic that in a crisis that was caused by the mismanagement of the financial system, then affected not just the financial system but also the whole of the real economy throughout all of our countries, the first reaction to seek a solution to the problem does not come from the financial system, which is still in the doldrums, it comes from the real economy. It comes from you.

We began to see and achieve clarity of thinking already in November. Why? Because we had a

framework within which to work. We asked ourselves whether the decent work framework was useful and the answer was “yes”. We began to prepare ourselves to be able to finalize the Global Jobs Pact that you have adopted here. I think it is extremely important, and we will have to project that. We will have to project the fact that this is the real economic answer; that this is the productive vision of the manner in which we have to confront this crisis; that it is from enterprises and workplaces; it is from investment and social protection; it is by caring about being able to create the jobs, and to have jobs of the quality that we demand, while at the same time dealing with the things that may be happening in the short term in an appropriate and fair manner.

All of the things that you have put together in the Global Jobs Pact certainly amount to a very practical way out that is linked to the way economies function. And it is not linked to that in a world that was invented by a financial system that has nothing to do with the way economies function. I think that we have to be extremely self-assured about what we have produced, because soon we are going to be told that things are better, and that maybe all of these international things, and these global jobs pacts, are not that necessary; let us go back to business as usual.

So, first I just want to thank you, because this is a very strong road map for the ILO, for you, for governments, for employers and workers, and certainly for the Office.

The second dimension of what is being done is the Summit. I think that to have the Presidents we had, to hear them say the things that they said, to have the Vice-Presidents, the 150 or so ministers and high-level representatives of government who took the floor, the employers, the workers, the panellists we had – we have to acknowledge the fact, the very strong political support for two things: first for the ILO and then for the ILO that is producing a Global Jobs Pact. We have to draw the conclusions as to what all that means, when you have that level of political support, which obviously has its counterpart, which is a high level of political expectation as to what we can do. But I prefer to deal with the problem of expectations and support than with lack of support and lack of expectations, if I may put it that way!

But it puts a heavy burden on us no doubt, and the burden is in two directions, judging from our Summit: the first is to engage now, quickly, and it is a Global Jobs Pact, and we have talked about that. The other is that most of them talked about the future, but they were talking about the future in the ILO. Now what does it mean when Presidents want to come to the ILO to say, you know what needs to be fixed in the system?

There was a beautiful discussion in one of the panels, with the person leading the panel saying, is it a problem *of* the system or is it a problem *in* the system? They kept asking that. I think that we can answer that in many ways. What we certainly know is that we need a better one, and this is what the Presidents told us. But why were they saying this here? This is a very important thing for us to consider, because I think what is at the back of their minds – or maybe at the front of their minds – is this: we cannot conceive a new governance system, we cannot think about moving forward with a fairer, greener and more sustainable globalization (which by now has become almost obvious in the world),

without the productive system, without the actors of the real economy.

Will you go to the IMF and say, why do you not invent a more balanced global system? Are you going to go to the WTO and say, please, could you think about a more balanced global system? Or will you go to the World Bank? They come to the ILO, so I think that we have to assume that it is our responsibility today, and now – it is a Global Jobs Pact, in line with our responsibilities under our Constitution, and the 2008 Declaration which are our medium- and long-term approaches.

We will have to begin thinking about these issues that the Presidents brought to us – not because we are distracting ourselves from our core functions, not because we are leaving aside those functions, but because, in performing those functions, part of it is the question of where does this all go? This, I think, is the very important message that they left with us.

And now let me say something – I do not know what the answer is – that has very much to do with your interest: we have to link all of this with other international organizations. A number of you, even some of the leaders who were here, said to me, we find this Global Jobs Pact fantastic, but we will need resources. What will happen if we sit down with the IMF and the World Bank and they say that the Global Jobs Pact of the ILO is very nice, but we think that what you should do is this, this and that?

These were political questions that were being put to me during this Conference, and I just want to transmit them to you. I do not know what the answer is; we are certainly going to try to get those and other institutions to say. We happen to agree that those are legitimate objectives – let us see how we can contribute to them. But your countries have representatives in these institutions, so it is not that I have to try to convince Strauss-Kahn or Bob Zoellick (with whom, of course, I have good relations, and we will certainly talk about this). But you as delegates can give instructions, you can tell your governments, you can bring back this issue to the foreign offices or the finance ministers and say, we have to see how we can combine what we have, this is what the tripartite ILO did in Geneva, and you know what our representatives are doing in these institutions. I leave that issue with you.

For all of these reasons, I want to thank all of you who put together this Pact: Ambassador Rapacki has certainly played a major role, Sir Roy Trotman, Daniel Funes de Rioja, Phil O'Reilly, Sharan Burrow, thank you. Thank you also for expressing your appreciation for the support that you received from ILO staff. I also want to thank Ambassador Rapacki and Daniel for the kind words they addressed to me.

So let me finish by saying, what now? First, it is now clear that we in the Office must devote ourselves fully to serving you in the follow-up to this, with a particular eye to the regions: the essence of this Pact is that it will have national, regional and subregional differences. Let me mention that there has already been a meeting of labour ministers of ECOWAS and a meeting of labour ministers of MERCOSUR during the Conference, and they have already issued a statement saying that they are planning to work together.

So we will be at your service, and see how we will address this issue internally in order to be the most effective and efficient partner in what you will be doing. And, of course, talk to the multilateral

system, as I mentioned, and many other follow-up activities. We will be reporting on things that will be done from now until reporting time, before the next Governing Body, as I have said at different stages.

Second, there is the implementation at home: what you do with it and how this can be carried forward. I have a certain conviction that this is an instrument that you want to use, that you are at least going to give it a try, that you are probably going to go back and talk to the Prime Ministers and the Presidents and say, have a look at this, because we have a pretty good instrument that can help us here at home. If there is anything that we can do to contribute to that, please count on us.

To conclude, I think that we can be pretty proud, and you can be pretty proud of what you have done in this Conference in general, and with the Global Jobs Pact. Not to rest on our laurels, but there is nothing worse than doing something extraordinary and not pausing afterwards to think about it. You have done something that is so extraordinary; let us pause and think about it to see how we can organize in order to make it happen.

What you have done is to show an ILO that is alive, that is acting in real time, that is capable of clarity of thought, because this is what the Pact represents, and that tripartism has assumed its responsibility in the midst of this crisis. That is a very important element to keep us together, and you have discharged your responsibility with distinction.

You are leaving this Conference, leaving behind a stronger ILO, and, honestly, I could not imagine a better way to celebrate the 90th anniversary than collectively to produce a Global Jobs Pact.

Thank you so much for what you have done.

The PRESIDENT

I would like to thank Mr Somavia for those words. He has encapsulated the spirit of the Conference which, in the face of the global economic and financial crisis, has been all the more strongly marked by consensus.

Now, with your permission, I shall use my privilege as President to make a brief closing statement.

We are now about to conclude this 98th Session of the Conference. Before we do so, I should wish to make some remarks. I may be repeating what you have already heard over the past two weeks, but I believe this is worthwhile, since what we have heard are expressions of commitment and solidarity to recover from the crisis and to build a better future for common and hard-working people.

Let me begin by putting on record my warmest gratitude to you all for asking me to act as your President of the Conference. This has been a great honour for my people, my country and, of course, me. I take this opportunity to thank all Governments, Workers and Employers for entrusting this task to me. I would like to give my warmest thanks and gratitude to the Director-General for all his support and inspiration. I also thank Mr Palma Caicedo, Mr Allam and Mr Zellhoefer, my fellow Vice-Presidents, for their very close cooperation, great support and friendship.

This has been a truly extraordinary Conference. While we celebrate the 90th anniversary of the ILO, we are also struck by an unprecedented economic and social crisis. As we unpick the causes of this crisis, we find that globalization, in spite of all of the benefits it has offered, has put social justice to

one side. The ILO, which is celebrating its 90th year of commitment towards social justice, is now facing its toughest test. The immediate challenge is to help all concerned constituents to cope with, and recover from, this crisis. But, there is a greater challenge: this is to decide how the ILO can help to promote the development of a new global social order.

The Conference this year was graced by the presence of several eminent personalities. I would like to thank the Director-General and the Office. These personalities included nine Heads of State and Government, five Vice-Presidents, a video message from the Prime Minister of Bangladesh and from the United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon. They have all echoed one thing: the ILO needs to seize this opportunity to play a proactive role in redefining the process and outcomes of the next phase of globalization, so that it is sustainable and equitable.

I recall, in particular, President Sarkozy's exposé of the history of social justice and the role of the ILO, and what a future cooperation model of globalization should look like. And President Lula, who challenged the existing development paradigm and set a new vision of socially just order. I also commend the call made by our Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, for collective resolve to help the least developed countries to get back on track for attaining the Millennium Development Goals. I recall the Kenyan Vice-President's call for *harambee*, or acting in concert, to achieve our common goals. All the leaders have lent their political support to the ILO so that it can play a stepped-up role.

The Conference throughout has underscored this challenge, but all constituent partners have expressed their willingness to rise above it. This is indeed a concrete manifestation of solidarity, of the ILO's unique structure of tripartism and social dialogue.

A key historical outcome of the Conference is a shared vision of a blueprint for recovery policies in the form of a Global Jobs Pact. This was highly discussed and debated by the Committee of the Whole, especially constituted to discuss the crisis. The Committee of the Whole has not only come up with a tripartite consensus document, but also a framework to promote recovery and to move to a better world. At the heart of it all lies the call for coordinated global action towards decent work. We need to refocus on full productive employment; the extension of social protection and a basic social floor; the participation of constituent partners through social dialogue and collective bargaining; and, most of all, respect for fundamental rights at work. The resolution sets out a number of practical measures in the four main areas of decent work and on shaping a fair and sustainable globalization. I have no doubt that the Pact will be a resource of practical policies for the constituent partners throughout the world.

As we disperse from this Conference, the most significant message that we can take along home is to ensure that the consensus we have reached on the Global Jobs Pact is fully articulated in national policy-making. To be truly effective, the implementation of the Pact can only be carried out through full inter-ministerial consensus and tripartite participation on policies and programmes. The Global Jobs Pact also recommends forging partnerships and policy coherence at the international level, including a

greater role for the ILO in the United Nations system and other global decision-making forums.

I wish to thank the Committee of the Whole, its Chairperson, Ambassador Rapacki, and its Vice-Chairpersons, Mr Funes de Rioja and Sir Roy Trotman, for delivering, in a great tradition of tripartism, a consensus document.

The document is quite distinct from the policy framework of the past two decades that was inspired by the Washington Consensus. It carries the ingredients of an alternative framework of economic and social development. The Global Jobs Pact prescribes a new direction, a new proposal and a renewed resolve. It addresses the incorporation of decent work in coordinated national and international action plans.

I am pleased to note that the other committees, under the guidance of their respective chairpersons and vice-chairpersons, have come up with excellent results, forged through strong tripartite consensus.

The Committee on HIV/AIDS completed its work in a spirit of consensus marked by a comprehensive tripartite attempt to find an agreed solution to the complex issue. The development of national tripartite policies was seen as central to the ILO's work on HIV/AIDS. On the one hand, the tripartite policies on HIV must be mainstreamed in the Decent Work Agenda, and, on the other, the ILO's positioning of world-of-work inventions has to be included in national AIDS strategies. Addressing stigma and discrimination was regarded as fundamental, particularly in encouraging workers to know their HIV status and seeking treatment when needed.

Fully aware of the potential impact of the financial crisis, the Committee reiterated the importance of safeguarding the gains in making treatment increasingly available to the millions still in need. We look forward to seeing the fruits of this consensus approach and the completion of this task with the adoption of a strong international standard next year. We hope that this will contribute effectively to our global efforts to save jobs and save lives.

The conclusions of the Committee on Gender Equality reaffirmed that the core value of the ILO was equality for all women and men in the world of work. This is a matter of social justice and is anchored in both a rights-based and economy-efficient approach.

The conclusions state that globalization had unevenly impacted on women and men, and that the global economic crisis should be viewed as an opportunity to shape new policy responses that promote gender equality. The discussion on recovery packages – in which women must have an equal voice – should take into account impacts on women and men, as well as an integrated gender perspective in all measures.

The conclusions give strategic policy and programme advice that has specific responsibilities and action for governments and workers' and employers' organizations, as well as priorities for support from the Office.

Allow me now to make a few brief remarks on Bangladesh, my country, which, under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, is aspiring to become a secular, modern, democratic and middle-income State. As you may be aware, Bangladesh, since independence in 1971, has made great strides in economic and social progress, although there are still many serious challenges. Nonetheless,

I ought to say that the country once called a “basket case” is now almost self-sufficient in food production. A country ravaged by natural disasters is now ready to help other countries with know-how on disaster management. Thanks to the Grameen Bank, which has earned the Nobel Peace Prize, we have pioneered the practice of microcredit. We are producing garments that are worn by millions all over the world, and you may be using dining table crockery made in Bangladesh. We have empowered women in many significant ways. Please note that both the Prime Minister and the leader of the opposition are female. We have also been among the first countries to successfully launch the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC).

The economic and social progress, however modest they seem, would be further hampered if the current economic crisis were to deepen further.

In achieving the success above, we have not ignored the basics of social progress. We are reviewing our Labour Code and labour market practices, including social dialogue, to ensure full respect for fundamental rights at work. We are embarking on a coordinated framework based on social protection and safety nets for the poor. Bangladesh is fully committed to achieving decent work for all.

We have all made great efforts to come to Geneva to participate in this special Conference. I thank you for your devotion to finding ways out of this unprecedented crisis that we face today.

I am sure, with all the collective zeal and efforts that I have seen, we shall be able to set ourselves a common agenda, to work together out of this crisis. Over the past three weeks, we have worked relentlessly towards this common goal. We have brainstormed, exchanged views and ideas and, most importantly, developed a strong feeling of fellowship.

Let us continue to nurture this fellowship and solidarity in the struggle towards social justice and the people’s welfare.

For me, this has been a most rewarding and enlightening experience – personally, professionally and politically. Once again, I extend special thanks to my fellow Officers of the Conference, the Deputy

Minister of Labour and Employment of Ecuador, Mr Palma Caicedo, Mr Allam, on behalf of the Employers, and Mr Zellhoefer, representing the Workers.

I also repeat my thanks to the Officers of the Committee for their dedication and enthusiasm that have led to the successful outcomes of the Conference.

I give my warmest thanks to the Director-General for his support and inspiration. The management team showed all the qualities of professionalism and dedication. While I thank all of them, I must make a special mention of the Director of the Relations, Meetings and Document Services Department, Mr Paulo Barcia, and Ms Althea Wright-Byll, Clerk of the Conference, assisted by Mr Tom Higgins. I have been very ably assisted by my fellow Bangladeshi, Muhammed Muqtada. They have all been truly magnificent in their support.

Finally, I would like to recognize the untiring efforts and dedication of all those who have worked behind the scenes: the secretaries, translators, interpreters, technicians, drivers and other members of the ILO secretariat. I thank them all. To the Director-General, Mr Somavia, I congratulate him on his re-election and wish him every success.

Now, let me simply extend my congratulations to you all for the success of the extraordinary session of the Conference.

Thank you all. I wish you a safe return home.

Long live the ILO!

The SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE

Mr President, before the conclusion of the Conference, I have the responsibility of handing over to you the sign of direction that you have had during all of this period, which is the gavel. So, this is the gavel for you to remember this moment in which you guided the destinies of the Conference.

The PRESIDENT

Thank you very much.

It is my honour to declare closed the 98th Session of the International Labour Conference.

(The Conference adjourned sine die at 1 p.m.)

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