Second and third reports of the Credentials Committee: Submission and noting

The President — The first item on our agenda this morning is the adoption of the second and third reports of the Credentials Committee which are published in Provisional Record Nos. 5C and 5D.

I would like to invite Mr. Oni, the Chairperson and Reporter of the Credentials Committee, to submit these two reports.

Original French: Mr. ONI (Government delegate, Benin; Chairperson and Reporter of the Credentials Committee) — I have the honour of presenting to the Conference a brief summary of this year's activities of the Credentials Committee, which appear in its second and third reports, Provisional Record Nos. 5C and 5D.

During this session of the Conference, the Committee has dealt with a total of 11 objections, concerning the nomination of delegations and six complaints concerning the non-payment or partial payment of expenses of social partners' delegates. We also received several communications concerning the composition of various delegations. The objections examined by the Committee can be grouped into three separate categories.

The first group concerns countries characterized by an absence of freedom of association – that is, where there are no trade union organizations. In its examination of the progress achieved by governments in order to comply with the obligation of ensuring the best representation of social partners, the Committee highlighted certain countries where legislation has been adopted recently allowing workers' committees to be established to defend workers' rights. Such measures could be considered as a preliminary step towards the creation of free and autonomous trade unions.

Secondly, in countries where trade union organizations exist, the Committee was called upon to examine problems of government interference in the nomination of social partners. The Committee would like to underline, in this context, the importance of observing the constitutional obligation governments have to ensure that employers and workers are able to choose freely the members of their respective delegations.

Finally, the Committee examined a third category of cases, mainly relating to the technical criteria used by certain governments to access the representativeness of trade union organizations. In these cases the Committee had to take a decision on the reasons why these governments considered a particular organization more representative of the interests of one of the social partners than another organization.

The Committee also has a mandate to examine complaints concerning the non-payment or partial payment of accommodation and travel expenses of representatives of social partners, and has examined a total of six cases in this context. The Committee stresses the importance of this obligation in ensuring full tripartite representation. Even the Credentials Committee is convinced that it has an important role to play with regard to the nomination of delegations in full observance of the principles of tripartism, nevertheless, there is still a long way to go in achieving this goal. The Committee would like to recall that it does not always have the necessary legal resources if a government declines to nominate a delegate for one of the social partners, either to avoid consultations with the most representative organizations or to evade examinations of the situation by the Committee. Consequently, the Committee requests that its mandate be extended to cover such cases, since they obviously fall within its global mandate of examining constitutional conformity in the nomination of delegations to the Conference. It therefore ask, the Governing Body to examine measures which could be adopted to this effect with a view to presenting them for discussion at the next year's session of the Conference.

To conclude, I would like to thank the Conference for having renewed its confidence in me as Chairperson of the Committee and to address my sincere thanks to my two colleagues, Ms. Sasso Mazzufferi and Mr. Edström, for their cooperation and their constant commitment to the matters before the Committee. I am grateful to them for the spirit of consensus which has characterized your work throughout this session of the Conference. I would also like to express my gratitude to the secretariat of the Committee and the Legal Adviser of the International Labour Office for their availability and the formidable skill they have shown in carrying out their work.

The President — The Credentials Committee adopted these reports unanimously and the Conference is simply called upon to note them.

(The reports are noted.)

The President — Mr. Oni has performed the role of Chairperson of the Committee for several years now and we are all grateful for the efficiency and experience he brings to this task. I would also like to thank and congratulate the Officers of the Committee.
The P R E S I D E N T — We shall now consider the report of the Committee on the Application of Standards. It is contained in Provisional Record No. 24, Parts One, Two and Three.

The Officers of the Committee were as follows: the Chairperson was Mr. Paixão Pardo, Government, Brazil; the Employer Vice-Chairperson was Mr. Wisskirchen of Germany; the Worker Vice-Chairperson was Mr. Cortebecq of Belgium; and the Reporter was Ms. Wubs of the Netherlands.

I now give the floor to Ms. Wubs, Reporter of the Credentials Committee, to submit the report.

Ms. Wubs (Government adviser delegate, Netherlands; Reporter of the Committee on the Application of Standards) — It is an honour for me to present, at this session of the International Labour Conference, the report of the Committee on the Application of Standards. International labour standards are at the heart of the mandate of the International Labour Organization and are indeed the flagship of the ILO. This flagship can only continue its important voyage if standards are linked to proper implementation and adequate supervisory systems. The supervisory mechanism of the ILO is widely considered as the foremost among international systems of supervision. Our Committee forms an essential part of the regular supervisory system, led by the Organization to ensure that ratified Conventions are fully applied and that constitutional obligations are observed by all ILO constituents. It also provides important social information for the debates on the setting and realization of standards in which the governing body is engaged.

You will note that, this year, the report of our Committee is in three parts. Part One contains a general report by the Committee; Part Two is a record of 25 individual cases which were examined by the Committee; and Part Three contains the report of the special sitting to examine developments concerning the question of the observance by the Government of Myanmar of the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29). I strongly recommend that all delegates should read the report of the Committee on the Application of Standards with care.

The work of the Committee was based on the report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, an institution whose independence, activity and impartiality is recognized. The Chair of the Committee of Experts, Ms. Robyn Layton, participated in our general debate and she addressed, inter alia, a number of issues relating to the General Survey of the Committee of Experts, the use of footnotes and the improvements in the working methods of the Committee of Experts.

Our Committee began its deliberation with a general discussion on international labour standards and on various issues of concern to governments, employers and workers, with regard to both the ILO supervisory system and its overall policy relating to standards. The Committee recognizes the 50th anniversary of the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102). The Committee also made observations of a more general nature on the application of the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122), and the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144). The debate on the working methods of the Committee illustrated the interest of all parties concerned in the work of this very important Committee. The Committee welcomed the changes that have been made to increase the efficiency, transparency and objectivity of the Committee's work, and will continue its review at the next session of the Conference.

In the second stage of our general discussion, the Committee examined the General Survey conducted by the Committee of Experts on the Application of the Protection of Wages Convention, 1949 (No. 95), and its accompanying Recommendation.

As usual, the survey was a compilation of information received both from governments that have ratified the Convention and from those who have not yet done so, as well as a number of comments from employers' and workers' organizations. The Committee pointed out that the prompt payment of wages directly to workers is essential and we regret the fact that this continues to be a problem in some parts of the world.

The Committee also noted the importance of the Protection of Workers' Claims (Employer's Insolvency) Convention, 1992 (No. 173).

The largest part of the Committee's work, and its most essential task, involved the examination of individual cases. We started with a healthy discussion of what we call automatic cases. These are cases where governments have had difficulties in meeting a constitutional obligation, including the failure to submit instruments adopted by the Conference to the competent national authorities. This obligation is unique in the international system and makes ILO consensus particularly effective. Other automatic cases include cases of failure to supply reports and information on ratified Conventions and failure to supply reports on unratified Conventions and Recommendations. It is essential that governments comply with their constitutional reporting obligations, as reporting lies at the basis of the ILO supervisory mechanism.

The Committee of Experts cannot do its work well if governments do not report, so we should all report in full, and on time. We cannot underline that enough.

Most of our time was devoted to a discussion of the individual cases on the list. In addition to a special sitting on Myanmar, the Committee invited 25 governments to discuss the implementation of legislation on specific ratified Conventions. It should be stressed that our Committee is not a tribunal where governments are put on trial. The Committee is a forum for frank, political and constructive dialogue and exchange of views. We try to help governments to make progress in terms of implementing their obligations. The cases we discussed focused largely on the core Conventions, but we also covered several of the so-called technical Conventions, such as those relating to asbestos and labour inspection. These Conventions are also of great importance as they affect the lives of workers in very direct ways.

Many of the discussions on the individual cases resulted in requests for ILO technical assistance, either in respect of issues raised by governments or affecting them. Most governments discussed their cases, and made a commitment to renew their efforts to bring their legislation into line with the standards they have ratified. You will find the details of the individual
cases in Part Two of the report. However, I should like to bring to your attention six cases which, according to the Committee, warranted being highlighted in a special paragraph of our report.

This paragraph demonstrates the profound concern of the Committee and its hope for ongoing and open dialogue between the Committee and the countries concerned. The countries concerned are Belarus, Cameroon and Myanmar, in connection with the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), Zimbabwe in connection with the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, in connection with the Equality of Treatment (Social Security) Convention, 1962 (No. 118), and lastly Mauritania, in connection with the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29).

The Committee decided that two of these countries had to be cited for continued failure to eliminate serious deficiencies in the application of ratified Conventions. Those countries were Myanmar and Belarus, both for Convention No. 87.

Please allow me to take this opportunity on behalf of the entire Committee to thank all of the government delegates who appeared before the Committee to inform it of the problems encountered by their countries and to discuss solutions. Their participation in the Committee's work is indeed invaluable and indispensable.

I should also like to thank the Chairperson of the Committee, Mr. Païxão Pardo, as well as the Employer and Worker Vice Chairpersons, Mr. Wisskirchen and Mr. Corteebeek, for their competence and efficiency, which ensured that the Committee could complete its work. I am impressed by their professionalism.

I should also like to thank Mr. Javillier and Mr. Swepton for their valuable support and all of their staff for their dedicated work, whether or not they were seen in the room. I should also like to pay tribute to the secretariat, including the interpreters, who, as usual, have done a wonderful job.

I would now like to recommend the report of the Committee on the Application of Standards for adoption by the International Labour Conference.

Original German: Mr. WISSKIRCHEN (Employer's adviser and substitute delegate, Germany) — Once again our Committee has presented a voluminous report made up of several parts. Thankfully, our Reporter has already highlighted some of its essential points. The drafting of this report required enormous efforts from the members of the Committee and unconditional support from many colleagues in the Office. As you know, this Conference Committee, acting on behalf of the Conference, makes the final assessment of whether member States have fulfilled not only their various reporting obligations arising from the Constitution, but also their material obligations, especially those arising from ratified Conventions. The Committee obtains its information primarily from the preliminary work carried out by the Committee of Experts and from dialogue with representatives of member States.

In many areas of our Organization's activities and in life in general, it would be wrong in the twenty-first century to abide by the motto: "Carry on as before". This is true of both standard setting and the supervision of standards. Instead of setting standards in the old-fashioned manner of previous decades, it is sensible and indeed necessary to agree on some essential basic concepts and on the best way of disseminating and implementing them. In doing so, we must avoid going into technical detail and avoid anything which could impede or hinder the creation of real jobs. What is true of this kind of modern standard setting, is even more true of the next stage, i.e. that of interpreting and applying standards. Standards which have been formulated as general basic principles must not be turned into a complex legal instrument through successive interpretations.

A review of effective methods for supervising standards encompasses technical, procedural and substantive aspects. A first sight, the wish that has been expressed from time to time to shorten the general discussion in the Conference Committee would seem to be more of a formal issue, but in fact it would clearly have major implications for the content of the report submitted by the Committee of Experts, the general part of which regularly contains dozens of individual comments and whole chapters on all kinds of activities and special procedures of the ILO, on its various bodies, on cooperation between the ILO and other regional or global organizations, etc. etc. Of course, it is interesting to find out in this way what has been going on inside the ILO and in the outside world. But not all of this comes within the terms of reference of the Committee of Experts. On the contrary, it belongs in a separate report of the Office or of the Director-General, but it has no place in the report of the Committee of Experts.

In this connection, what the experts have said this year about the review of their own working methods, which has been going on for years, is also quite remarkable. They report that an agreement has been reached on significant changes in their working methods, but then, rather surprisingly, they do not state what these changes are, but speak only of the purposes of these changes. That is puzzling. Specifically, however, they say that they want to participate in field missions and other activities, of the ILO, in its external activities, so to speak, with a view, in the words of paragraph 8 of the report of the Committee of Experts, "to promoting the visibility and influence of the Committee and its work". We seriously wonder whether the independence of the Committee of Experts, which is always quite rightly stressed, is compatible with the experts' participation in the ILO's many operative activities. In any case, only the Conference could decide on such an extension of the mandate which it established for the Committee of Experts in 1926. A ny blurring of the powers of Committee of Experts and the ILO's other many and various responsibilities could, we feel, have fatal consequences for the credibility, independence, objectivity and impartiality of the Committee of Experts.

The experts are not entitled to wipe the ratification of a particular Convention, although this often happens even when the tripartite political forum of this Organization, that is the Governing Body, has not made any such recommendation, or has done so in different terms. And the same is true of attempts by the Committee of Experts to classify a Convention as a fundamental or priority Convention of the Organization.
Similar reservations exist with what are usually general comments made by the experts on particular Conventions. This year, as so often in the past, these comments related to Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102), and Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122), of course, these are important Conventions, but so are many others. The experts' extensive comments considerably lengthens the general part of their report. Given the complexity of the abovementioned Conventions, these chapters can only be drafted in a very general way. They tend to be more in the nature of a textbook, although they do not display the subtle precision required of a textbook. I do not have time, at this point, to criticize individual comments, although this would in fact be justified.

We will have to consider all these matters in the general discussion of the Conference Committee. For that reason there is only a very limited possibility of reducing the length of this general discussion. It would in any case be completely unacceptable if the Conference Committee were unable to state its position on points raised by the Committee of Experts, although the tripartite structure of the Conference Committee fully reflects the special nature of the ILO. Our Committee is part of the Conference. It presents its report to the plenary sitting of the Conference and the report is discussed and adopted in this, the highest body of the ILO.

We therefore feel more than justified in giving this report of the Conference Committee, which is adopted by the Conference, a more appropriate format. The report of the Committee of Experts is issued every year as a glossy book. The report of the Conference Committee almost escapes notice as one of the many Provisional Records of this Conference and printed on recyclable paper. We think that this is unjustified discrimination against the Conference Committee and its activities and, when all is said and done, an affront to the Conference.

This year, two records were broken. In addition to the longest general report ever produced by the experts, the Committee of Experts also provided the longest General Survey under article 19 of the ILO Constitution. That is perhaps why the discussion of this survey takes up a disproportionate part of our Committee's report, although it was not nearly as long as the survey. Moreover, in this connection, it would be apt to say "less would have been more", because a shorter survey would have attracted the interest of many more readers. The Protection of Wages Convention, 1949 (No. 95) is an important technical Convention which is of considerable practical significance to the workers. The main objectives are, inter alia, the forms in which wages are paid, the freedom of the workers to dispose of their wages and the enforcement of the obligation to pay wages. In recent years we have repeatedly discussed these subjects when examining individual cases.

Perhaps for this reason, the General Survey sometimes seems to examine individual country-specific cases; and these individual cases, generally speaking, show that there is quite clearly a practical need for the timely and full payment of wages. However, it repeatedly becomes apparent that this cannot be achieved with administrative regulations and measures alone. What I mean by this is that no matter how many different regulations there are on the payment of wages, they will not be implemented if
paragraphs headed “special cases” in the report of the Committee on the Application of Standards. This concerns the following countries: Belarus, as regards the application of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87); Cameroon, as regards the application of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87); the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, as regards the application of the Equality of Treatment (Social Security) Convention, 1962 (No. 118); Mauritania, as regards the application of the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29); Myanmar, as regards the application of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87); and Zimbabwe, as regards the application of the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98). Of these six member States, it was noted that Belarus and Myanmar had failed continually over several years to comply with their obligations.

We could not agree to the special paragraph on Colombia that the workers wanted, as we believe that continued and intensified technical cooperation between Colombia and the ILO is a much more appropriate instrument for dealing with this case.

The special sitting to examine developments concerning the question of the observance by the Government of Myanmar of the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), falls outside this framework. The Conference, at its 88th Session in June 2000, had decided that our Committee would hold a special sitting on Myanmar each year for as long as there continued to be no indications that Myanmar had complied with its obligations. In the last few weeks, new agreements have been drawn up with Myanmar, such as, for example, a formal understanding on the establishment of a facilitator, in addition to the activities of the ILO Liaison Officer who began work last year. Moreover, a very detailed action plan was agreed. These agreements now have to be implemented and, above all, must show some results. Myanmar is at present still a long way from fulfilling its obligations, as you can see from the separate Part Three of the report of the Committee on the Application of Standards.

Finally, we can observe that, this year once again, we enjoyed excellent cooperation with the Workers’ group, in particular with the spokesperson, Mr. Cortebeeck. We thank Mr. Javillier, Director of the International Labour Standards Department, and all his team for the work they have put in before and during the Conference. We had in M. R. Paixão Pardo, a very knowledgeable Chairperson who was able to make the Committee run smoothly and efficiently. We also had a very committed Reporter, Ms. Wubs. My final remarks go as always to all my colleagues in the Committee and to the whole of the Employers’ group. I thank you all for your trust and support. This is not something you take for granted when you have been doing this for 21 consecutive years. I would also particularly like to thank my long-standing friend, Mr. E d Potter, for his multifaceted and selfless help. I also thank our knowledgeable colleague, Mr Yurén from the International Organisation of Employers. We would like to recommend that you pay particular attention to the report of the Committee on the Application of Standards — it deserves it.

Original French: Mr. CORTEBEECK (Workers’ adviser and substitute delegate, Belgium; Worker Vice-Chairperson of the Committee on the Application of Standards) — It is my honour as the Worker spokesperson to submit to you the report of the Committee on the Application of Standards.

As a supervisory body, the Committee on the Application of Standards operates on the basis of working methods that differ from those of other Conference committees. The essential role of our Committee is to supervise the effective application in law and practice of international labour Conventions by member States that have ratified them. Once again we have noted that this supervision is essential, both to maintain the credibility of the ILO and to guarantee a social framework for economic globalization based on the fundamental ILO principles, namely the universal nature of its instruments, on the one hand, and the tripartite way in which it functions, on the other.

The strength of the ILO and its supervisory machinery is unquestionably the frank and open discussions that take place among the Government, Employers’ and Workers’ groups. This year, once again, we have had such a dialogue, thanks largely, to the report and observations of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations. The Experts once again have provided us with a report of very high quality, and the Committee Chairperson has given us very helpful explanations, notably in the various footnotes contained in the report. More than ever, we are convinced that the complementarity between the two Committees is one of the pillars of the supervisory system. The Committee of Experts provides impartial legal and technical analysis, while our tripartite Committee adds its analyses, positions and the testimony of those who are very close to realities on the ground.

The first part of our work, as is the case each year, was devoted to the General Report of the Committee of Experts. We have called for an enhancement of the standards-related policy and for strengthening of the standards system, and discussed the future of the standards policy. A few years ago the Director-General, in his Report to the Conference, set out some ideas for future standards-related activities. Last year, Mr. Javillier presented us with an “integrated approach”. This year, the new approach was tested for the first time in the Committee on Occupational Safety and Health.

We have some questions and a number of doubts as to the purpose of this approach. If the purpose of the integrated approach is to strengthen the visibility, coherence and effectiveness of standards and actions which are at present too diffuse, then we can only agree and offer our cooperation. If the approach is designed to discuss the very many methods of arriving at a fixed objective then, once again, we are very much in favour. But if, on the other hand, the purpose is to establish a type of standard or indicative standards or commitments that are more moral than legal, or framework agreements rather than precise Conventions, then we must state our opposition. We are rather wary, inasmuch as we have seen at present in other international bodies a kind of slippage of legal instruments and binding agreements towards less binding instruments. In other words, we are seeing a movement away from “hard law” towards “soft law” or, to use the language of the legal experts, a movement from dura lex towards dulce lex.

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To retreat, in terms of law, even for the purpose of ultimately advancing further does not seem to us to be a good strategy for strengthening the ILO system. For us, the purpose of the evaluation should be to strengthen the standards system, which we consider to be the backbone of the ILO. It is for the Governing Body to discuss the best standards-related policy.

As a contribution to this discussion I would like to share with you some of the other wishes of the Workers’ group with regard to standards. First, we would like the ILO’s International Labour Standards Department to be given the necessary financial resources both to carry out its current tasks and to take on other essential tasks in the future. I am thinking, in particular, of the integration of standards into the missions of other ILO departments – for example, everything that has to do with “decent work”. We are also thinking about the promotion of fundamental standards within other international organizations. We would like the ILO to do more to organize concerted efforts, rather than competition, among these international organizations in order to ensure the single and indivisible nature of the standards so that other bodies will not be able to “cherry-pick” among the fundamental standards.

Finally, we would like the Department to be able to respond to all the requests that are made for technical cooperation. During this Conference, we were rather generous in proposing technical assistance and direct contact missions for quite a few countries. We do not want to be told next year that some of these missions were not able to take place because of a lack of resources, because the ILO had been found wanting.

We are very pleased by the large number of ratifications of fundamental Conventions following the promotion campaign after the 1998 Declaration. Nonetheless, this should not lead us to think that the ILO is concerned only with the fundamental Conventions. The purpose of the ILO is to provide international and universal standards that apply to all the workers of the world in order to bring about greater social justice. Such social justice does not come about only through the fundamental standards. We also need mechanisms for implementation and for supervising the application of these standards. There must also be social protection and health and safety at work. In short, what we need is work and quality jobs, and these objectives are outside the scope of the fundamental Conventions.

That is why during the general discussion we brought up two specific Conventions to which the Experts had also devoted some attention. These two Conventions are related and concern employment policy and social security.

In the area of social security, we tolerate our belief that privatization is not the solution. Private insurance institutions, too, are faced with serious financial difficulties. They are also selective – highly selective, in fact – and are really only designed for the better-off. That is why we want a debate on social security in order to combat the concept of a two-tier social protection system and to ensure social protection for everyone.

As regards employment policy, we would like all countries to ratify and apply Convention No. 122. A sound employment policy will be on the agenda for next year, we expect that the Experts will closely examine all aspects, including the impact of activation measures and restructuring practices. We would also like them to take into account two external factors which are also significant constraints. First, macroeconomic policy — there is no employment policy without an economic policy that accompanies it. Secondly, it is important to take account of the wider context, for example policies formulated at a regionalist or supranational level. The ILO must take account of certain supranational developments, for example, the European Union. We are very pleased that references to European provisions have been included, in particular, the reference to the European Employment Strategy (in the conclusions in respect of the case of Portugal) and the request made to Croatia to bring its safety and health legislation into line with European Union standards. So let us not forget these supranational contexts.

The second part of the Committee’s work was devoted to the General Survey which this year concerned the Protection of Wages Convention, 1949 (No. 95). We particularly appreciated this Survey — both the legal considerations and the detailed descriptions of laws and practice throughout the world. The importance of this Convention can be clearly seen from the number of violations. We have expressed our profound concern with regard to violations in Africa, Argentina and above all in central Europe, in particular, failure to pay wages and arrears of wages in a number of countries, the abusive use of payment in kind, and failure to give due priority to wage payments in the event of bankruptcy. Elsewhere, and especially in western Europe, protection of wages has been reduced by the introduction of new forms of remuneration, for example certain types of financial participation. In reading the General Survey, we have formed the impression that what we are witnessing is a movement backwards in history with the re-emergence of certain practices resembling the “truck system” of the nineteenth century.

In order to combat this tendency, we have suggested a number of measures. These are technical assistance to specific governments; ratification of the 1995 Protocol to Convention No. 81, calling for effective and independent labour inspection (a Protocol that has been ratified by exactly ten countries); and easy access of workers to an independent judiciary.

The third part of our work was, as always, devoted to the examination of individual cases. This year, we dealt with 26 cases, 25 of which were examined within the standard procedure and one in a special session. For Myanmar, regarding the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29). The Committee was not able to deal with all the cases that deserved to be taken up for a number of reasons. First, there were time constraints which are not necessarily inevitable. The automatic cases, for example, might be discussed during the first week, and certain other cases could be prepared in advance, particularly those dealt with in footnotes, in order to take up more of these cases in the first few days of the second week. A nother factor was the large number of problems with application. The Experts’ report contained 1,910 observations, of which some 700 were substantial. The criteria that we used to make the very difficult choices are set out in document D.1 on the Committee’s working methods. For those who have difficulties with the list, I would like to say that it is clear that everyone would like to have clear and transparent criteria for the purposes of establishing the list. However, it is also clear that it is not possible to have criteria that would lead, in a
quasi-automated fashion, to identifying the individual cases for discussion. They need to strike a balance between the various categories of Conventions, but also a geographic or geopolitical balance reflecting different rates of industrialization and development, together with the degree of urgency or seriousness of the individual cases. Consequently, even though it is impossible to establish a formula which would be mathematically “perfect”, the need to strike an appropriate overall balance is borne in mind throughout the process, because we want the process to be perceived as being fair and equitable.

In the context of the consultations on working methods that were organized by the Department last year, neither the Governments, nor the Workers, nor the Employers were able to come up with other methods or criteria that were more effective. The working methods, moreover, had been adopted by our tripartite Committee. It is therefore difficult to understand that after this entire process certain criticisms are still being expressed. A cursory study of the list of individual cases of recent years would lead one to conclude that we have, for the most part, reached the balance that has been sought.

The list of cases is in no way a “blacklist”, or a sampling of countries with a poor track record. Naturally, the list includes the five countries that have received footnotes: Myanmar (Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)); Libya (Arab Jamahiriyah (Equality of Treatment (Social Security) Convention, 1962 (No. 118)); Uruguay (Minimum Wage Fixing Convention, 1970 (No. 131)); Ecuador (Hours of Work and Rest Periods (Road Transport) Convention, 1979 (No. 153)); and Croatia (Asbestos Convention, 1986 (No. 162)). The others on the list generally reflect our criteria.

We made four comments regarding the list of cases. Our first concerned Norway and the application of the Radiation Protection Convention, 1960 (No. 115). We were unable to take up this case because there was no observation in the Committee of Experts’ report. This appears to have been an unfortunate oversight.

A second comment concerned Argentina and the application of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87). For a number of years, the Experts have noted significant discrepancies between national legislation and the Convention and have asked the Government to make corrections. We hope that the Government next year will be able to report some progress in the application of this Convention.

Third, we raised the problem of trafficking and exploitation of children, in particular in West Africa, with Burkina Faso and Mali as countries of origin, and Gabon and Côte d’Ivoire as destination countries. We expressed the hope that this global phenomena would be examined by the Experts in their next report so as to allow discussion at the next session of the Conference.

Finally, we once again regret the fact that it was not possible to have any dialogue with the Government of Japan on the application of the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29). For too long, this case has been disrupting our work because of an absolute inertia that seems incomprehensible in view of historical trends. Once again, it seems that we must put it off again. We will therefore require the Experts to come back to it again next year, and if nothing changes then we will insist on discussing the case the year after that.

The case of Japan raises the same problem as other countries which are on the list, year after year, but which fail entirely to act on the conclusions of the Committee. What approach should we adopt? We cannot simply remove them from the list, since that would be rewarding the “bad students”. I am asking the question, since we do not really have any solution other than the one which we have adopted up to now.

We have decided to devote a special paragraph, or even a special report, to very serious cases. The special report was the result of a first special session held in 2001 on the subject of forced labour in Myanmar. This case has a long history in our Organisation. It has been taken up several times in a special paragraph. It has also been taken up several times in a special report. Missions have visited the country, and the article 33 procedure was applied for the first time in relation to this case and a Liaison Officer appointed, a plan of action developed, and the case has come up again this year under the aggravating circumstances with which we are all familiar.

This year we had six special paragraphs and the special report that I have already mentioned. The special paragraphs relate to Belarus (Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87)), for continued non-compliance; Cameroon (The Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87)); Libya (Arab Jamahiriyah (Equality of Treatment (Social Security) Convention, 1962 (No. 118)); Mauritania (Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)); Myanmar (Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87)) for continued non-compliance; and Zimbabwe (Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98)).

We were unable to agree on a special paragraph for Colombia, although even by comparison with the other cases, the serious and continuing situation of abuses in that country would merit such a paragraph. It will be for the Governing Body to decide, but in their statement the Worker members of the Committee have asked for a Commission of inquiry to be sent to Colombia. This is not in any way a hostile act against the Government, but rather the expression of profound concern at the impunity, the violence and the murders of trade union members and leaders.

In conclusion, I would like to express my appreciation and thanks. I would first like to thank Mr. Sergio Paixão Pardo, the Chairperson of our Committee, for the way in which he guided our work. He guided us during discussions that were sometimes difficult and even turbulent, which seemed unlikely ever to lead to unanimous conclusions. His patience was exemplary, in very difficult situations.

The Committee’s report shows that we once again had excellent discussions, both on trends with regard to international standards in general and their effective application in law and practice.

We would also like to thank our Reporter, Ms. Erlien Wubs, a Government member from the Netherlands. We would like to thank the Chairperson of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, Ms. Robyn Layton, for having attended and taken part in the discussion on the general report and the General Survey.

I would also like to thank Mr. Javillier, Director of the International Labour Standards Department, and his team, including Mr. Gernigon, Mr. Swepton.
and Ms. Acel-Lenners, as well as the coordinators and the secretariat and technical services staff who were always there to make our work easier.

The Workers’ group would also like to thank Mr. Wittskirchen, the Employer spokesperson, for his spirit of cooperation and dialogue, as well as Mr. Potter, for his very active role. I would also like to thank Monique Cloutier and Claude Akpokavie from ACTRAV who, once again, guided and accompanied us.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank the members of the Workers’ group for their excellent cooperation and their very pertinent statements and, in particular, the Officers of our group and the colleagues who assisted me in the presentation of certain cases.

Our report was adopted unanimously by our Committee and I would ask the Conference to do the same.

Original Portuguese: Mr. PAIXÃO PARDO (Government adviser and substitute delegate, Brazil; Chairperson of the Committee on the Application of Standards) — I would like to pay tribute to previous speakers and will try to avoid repeating comments that have already been made concerning the work of the Committee. I will simply say that all of that work was of a very high standard, as were the relevant interventions. I am equally pleased with the excellent documents we have produced.

This year, we examined 26 cases, in a spirit of constructive dialogue and broad participation. There was no positive spirit with regard to any government, and no political dimension, but merely an attempt to pursue that constructive dialogue. We held a special session on Myanmar, with regard to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), and we hope that this will continue in the future, so that we can analyse this very serious case in greater depth, or even record any progress made.

There has been a lot of discussion concerning methods of work. Over the last few years, we have looked closely at this subject, and have already adopted a number of changes. We hold a very successful interactive session this year, which, as well as being extremely informative, gave new members the chance to become better acquainted with the work of the Committee.

I would urge all members to give further thought to issues relating to methods of work, not just when the list of countries is adopted, but when they get back to their respective countries, so that we might have a better discussion in future years.

I would like to thank the Worker Vice-Chairperson, Mr. Cortebeeck, the Employer Vice-Chairperson, Mr. Wittskirchen, and our Reporters who, despite his young age, demonstrated considerable knowledge of standards and contributed enormously to our discussion. My thanks also go to Mr. Javillier, to the secretariat in general, and to all the members of our support team, which underpinned the work of the Committee on the Application of Standards.

I am convinced that the eyes of the world are focused on the work of the Committee on the Application of Standards. If anyone in this room, or anyone else for that matter, had any illusions that standards were merely dead letter, I would invite them to take a look at the work of our Committee, and to witness the vitality and efficiency of its debates.

Finally, I would like to add that we have put every effort into our work, and therefore we hope that the report of this Committee will be adopted by the Conference.

**Record vote on the resolution concerning the adoption of the Programme and Budget for 2004-05 and the allocation of the budget of income among member states**

The President — We shall now proceed to a record vote on the resolution concerning the adoption of the Programme and Budget for 2004-05 and the allocation of the budget of income among member States. The resolution is contained in Provisional Record No. 17.

(A record vote is taken.)

(The detailed results of the vote will be found at the end of the record of this sitting.)

The President — The result of the vote is as follows: 402 votes in favour, none against, with 16 abstentions. Since the quorum is 280, and the required two-thirds majority is 269, the resolution is adopted.

(The resolution is adopted.)

The President — There are a number of countries that have requested the right to speak to clarify their vote. I will call on them and ask them to speak from their place.

Government delegate, Australia — The Australian Government delegate abstained in the vote on the programme and budget. Similarly, we were unable to join a consensus on the budget in the Finance Committee.

Australia is the 12th largest contributor to the ILO’s regular budget, and these decisions were not taken lightly. As recorded in paragraph 89 of Provisional Record No. 17, Australia believes that steps should have been taken to further prioritize programmes, and, in view of the availability of the 2000-01 surplus, believes that a zero nominal growth budget would have been much more appropriate.

We also have ongoing concerns with the cost of the staff grading structure, and we welcome the Director-General’s commitment to review the grading structure; we expect this to yield considerable cost savings.

As in other specialized agencies, Australia was prepared to join a consensus on the budget if the Office had been prepared to show some flexibility in its budget proposals. The absence of any flexibility or willingness to negotiate by the Office has led us to withhold support for this programme and budget.

Government delegate, United Kingdom — The Government of the United Kingdom has abstained in this vote because we do not support the budget level contained in the resolution concerning the adoption of the Programme and Budget for 2004-05. The United Kingdom strongly supports the work of the ILO, and we also believe that all international organizations and governments need to continue to prioritize their resources and make efficiency savings. The ILO is no exception.

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We recognize the pressures on the Organization, but the United Nations system cannot be entirely demand-led. It must decide how best to deploy the resources available.

In this context, we cannot ignore the fact that the ILO has retained US$51 million for the 2000-01 surplus. The amendments to the Financial Regulations that the Conference has approved today, and about which the Government of the United Kingdom continues to have serious reservations, are likely to perpetuate this kind of budgetary growth.

As we have made clear throughout the negotiations on the budget level, we continue to believe that the Organization should be able to absorb cost increases without increasing its budget level.

Government delegate, Canada — For the reasons outlined in our interventions recorded in the report of the Finance Committee, Canada could not support the resolution on the programme budget, and so abstained in this vote. The Government of Canada continues to seek the maintenance of a zero nominal growth approach across the United Nations system. We continue to believe that with prioritization, greater efficiencies and cost savings, the amount of the increase approved for this biennial budget could have been found without having to resort to increasing the level of the budget.

In this connection, I wish also to note for the record that my Government continues to have serious reservations, about the decision of this session of the Conference on the amendment to the Financial Regulations, concerning the treatment of surpluses.

Government delegate, New Zealand — The Government of New Zealand has taken a consistent position in discussions regarding the Programme and Budget proposals for 2004-05. We believe that the starting point for any budget should be zero nominal growth. We believe also that organizations faced with cost increases which are operating in a well-functioning results-based budgeting environment should reasonably be able to ask for an increase in the budget beyond zero nominal growth.

In order to agree to such a request, we believe that a substantive dialogue on efficiency and priorities should, and must, take place against the backdrop of an environment that strives for the best use of resources to ensure the optimal delivery of strategic objectives.

The Government of New Zealand has welcomed the improvements made by the ILO in this regard, but believes that further progress must be made, particularly in the areas of evaluation and human resources management.

We would have welcomed more flexibility and a substantive dialogue on the programme and budget proposals at both the Governing Body and during the Conference since this would have allowed us to join a consensus.

We have, therefore, with regret, abstained from the vote today.

Government delegate, Japan — The Government of Japan agrees with this resolution on the 2004-05 budget. In anticipation of the secretariat’s further efforts, we strongly believe that strict financial discipline should be observed in all United Nations agencies, including the ILO, and we have repeatedly asked the secretariat for further efforts to have a zero nominal growth budget. We deeply regret that this could not be achieved in this programme and budget.

Nevertheless, we look forward to the Director-General’s further efforts at cost savings, such as the review of the post structure that we have requested. Once again, we would like to stress the necessity of this reform of the staff grade structure. It is important not only from the point of cost savings, but also from that of sound organizational structure.

In this regard, in light of the Director-General’s commitment to continue his efforts to identify and implement measures for budget savings, the Government of Japan accepts this budget, in spite of our continuous basic stance and with the expectation of effective results in the near future.

Final record vote on the Seafarers’ Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003

The President — We shall now conduct the final record vote on the seafarers’ Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003, as contained in Provisional Record No. 20.

(A record vote is taken.)

(The detailed results of the vote will be found at the end of the record of this sitting.)

The President — The result of the votes is as follows: 392 votes in favour, none against, with 20 abstentions. Since the quorum is 280, and the required two-thirds majority is 262, the Seafarer’s Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003, is adopted.

(The Convention is adopted.)

The President — A number of delegates have asked to take the floor to explain their vote.

Original German: Government delegate, Switzerland — Switzerland has voted in favour. I want to explain the vote. The security system for Swiss seafarers, a system which prevails in Switzerland, is very much in line with what has just been adopted.

A Swiss seafarer with a valid Swiss passport can meet the highest requirements of a security system; therefore, we are already fully complying with such a system, in particular with the use of information technology. Of course, it is necessary to make sure that the amount of expenditure involved for states with a small number of seafarers is kept in proportion.

Government delegate, Canada — The Government of Canada has voted in favour of the new Seafarers’ Convention. Canada has ratified the Seafarers’ Identity Documents Convention, 1958 (No. 108), and is in conformity with its provisions. Notwithstanding comments made here yesterday, the Government of Canada has made no policy or other changes inconsistent with its international obligations under the Seafarers’ Identity Documents Convention, 1958 (No. 108). The Government of Canada welcomes this new Convention. We will be reviewing it thoroughly and will give careful consideration to its ratification.

Government delegate, United States — It is a pleasure to be able to join with other delegations
today in voting in favour of the revised seafarers' identity documents Convention. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Committee of the International Labour Office for their hard work in drafting this new and important instrument. We believe that it strikes a balance between the need for improved security and the need to protect the rights of seafarers and facilitate maritime commerce. This was a difficult task, but the fact that it has been accomplished in record time testifies to the value of tripartite consultation as practised here in the ILO. As we said in the Committee, the United States regrets that the Convention contains provisions in Article 6, paragraphs 6 and 7, which establish obligations that are contrary to current US immigration regulations which are in practice. United States law requires a visa for shore leave, joining a ship or transferring to another ship, passing in transit to join a ship in another country, or for repatriation. The seafarers' identity document will not be accepted in lieu of a visa or travel document. Possession of a seafarers' identity document will not guarantee issuance of a US visa. Nevertheless, we recognize the special professional needs of seafarers as described in the Preamble to this Convention and we are considering what steps we can take to facilitate the visa application process for them.

Original Spanish: Government delegate, Mexico — As regards the revised text of the Convention, I would like to point out that the Government of Mexico thinks that from the labour point of view its content would not infringe or be of detriment to the rights of Mexican seafarers.

It is most appropriate that the proposed Convention provides that procedures be implemented to prevent interference with, or unauthorized access to, the personal data of seafarers, and to enable seafarers to check the validity of the corresponding data contained in the registers. Members are also called upon to ensure that personal data are used exclusively to validate seafarers' identity documents.

However, I would like to point out that the current general law on population in Mexico and the visa system as established by the Government of Mexico, both through unilateral and bilateral agreements, are incompatible with Article 6, paragraph 6, of the Convention. This paragraph is in contradiction with our laws and practice and with current instruments concerning the documentation of foreign nationals. Therefore, those responsible for consular issues of the Government of Mexico would have to carry out a detailed review of the scope of the present proposed Convention.

For this reason, the Government representative of Mexico abstained from this vote.

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For this reason, the Government representative of Mexico abstained from this vote.

Report of the Committee on the Application of Standards: Discussion and Adoption

The President — We shall now continue with an examination of the report of the Committee on the Application of Standards. The general discussion on the report is now open.

Mr. Shaharudin (Government delegate, Malaysia; speaking on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries) — Malaysia is taking the floor to speak on behalf of the non-aligned member States on the deliberations of the Committee on the Application of Standards. The Non-Aligned Movement notes with concern the working methods of the Committee on the Application of Standards. The Non-Aligned Movement regrets to note that efforts made by member States in this area are not duly recognized and taken into consideration, as manifested in some cases and clearly in the Committee's conclusions. We believe that the Committee's conclusions should be consistent with the interventions made during the debate in this Committee. In this regard, the member States of the Non-Aligned Movement would like to call for a further review of the working methods of the Committee on the Application of Standards.

Mr. Mononga (Government delegate, Malawi) — This statement is in support of the statement just made by the Government delegate of Malaysia, who is our Chairperson, Chairperson of the Non-Aligned Movement, regarding the report of the Committee on the Application of Standards. It would indeed seem that the work done by some governments in compliance with the instructions of the Committee are not adequately recognized. It also looks like the conclusions of this Committee are somehow already prejudged and fixed prior to the discussion of the cases upon which governments are requested to provide information on compliance mechanisms. In this context, the Officers of the Committee inevitably find it difficult to include the new information provided by individual governments during the meetings of the Committee, especially in the conclusions of the proceedings of the Committee. Hence, the Committee arrives automatically at prejudged conclusions, which the governments concerned oftentimes have problems agreeing with. The Government of Malawi, therefore, joins Malaysia in requesting a thorough review of the working methods of the Committee on the Application of Standards so that they become as democratic and as transparent as those of the other Conference committees, of course in line with the long-standing tradition of this important Organization. The Malawi Government delegation is afraid that if nothing is done about it, governments will be discouraged from ratifying ILO Conventions.

Mr. Mladlana (Minister of Labour, South Africa) — South Africa supports the sentiments expressed in the statement read on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement by the representative from Malaysia. We note with great concern the conclusions reached by the Committee regardless of the immense efforts and possible progress made by the Government of Zimbabwe in addressing issues last year. It is indeed perplexing and bewildering, to say the least, that the outcome of deliberations of the Committee was in no way influenced by the convincing progress report on progress given by the Honourable Minister Moyo during the Committee's deliberations. A brief summary of what the Honourable Minister placed on the Committee's record may help amplify my point. According to the Minister, the following set of events reached by the Committee regardless of the immense efforts and possible progress made by the Government of Zimbabwe in addressing issues last year. It is indeed perplexing and bewildering, to say the least, that the outcome of deliberations of the Committee was in no way influenced by the convincing progress report on progress given by the Honourable Minister Moyo during the Committee's deliberations. A brief summary of what the Honourable Minister placed on the Committee's record may help amplify my point. According to the Minister, the following set of events
technical assistance and expertise from the ILO. Special regulations, conforming with Article 2 of the Convention, had been adopted to deal with the protection of workers' organizations against acts of interference by employers' organizations and vice versa. A new dispute settlement mechanism had been established to deal with the compulsory arbitration in the context of collective bargaining. This was in response to concerns expressed by the Committee of Experts. We support the view that the Committee should have taken note of these legislative changes and allowed the Committee of Experts to examine these before arriving at the conclusion to prematurely place Zimbabwe in a special paragraph. It is our view that with this conclusion the Committee may have, inadvertently, unwittingly, and insidiously been influenced by their understanding of the political dynamics in Zimbabwe, which are not only complex but also do not fall within the scope of the Committee. Those who are genuinely concerned about the political situation in Zimbabwe should take heart in the fact that African leaders in the region have given the task to normalize the situation to the Presidents of South Africa, Nigeria and Malawi. The intervention of these Excellencies is based on the premise that the problems of Zimbabwe will be solved by Zimbabweans themselves, and that the role of outsiders is to support the efforts of indigenous people of that country. We agree with the conclusion that the outstanding work already started by the ILO in dealing with the outstanding labour matters should be encouraged and supported until its logical conclusion. The placing of Zimbabwe in a special paragraph and a proposed contacts mission seems ill-conceived and premature at this stage.

Original Spanish: Mr. MORA GODOY (Government delegate, Cuba) — Cuba would also like to endorse the statement made by Malaysia on behalf of the non-aligned countries. My delegation feels compelled to take the floor during this meeting in order to refute the conclusions concerning Cuba in the report of the Committee on the Application of Standards. We do so, firstly, because this constitutes an attempt to back up the lies and the campaign against Cuba, waged by its powerful neighbour to try to discredit the Cuban revolution, which the Cuban people will defend at all costs, and, secondly, because we want to denounce the way in which the Committee on the Application of Standards is manipulated by a small group of countries which imposes its view, by preparing proposals behind the scenes which do not reflect the debates that take place within the Committee, and by pursuing specific political aims against developing countries.

Cuba is one of the 24 developing countries which provided information to the Committee on the Application of Standards in a spirit of cooperation. However, the substantive responses and information provided by my Government were not taken into account, and the conclusions did not reflect the diversity of opinions expressed in the course of the debate.

All of us thought that the conclusions had been drafted in advance, probably on the previous day, and no time was taken to discuss them, which had been allowed for in previous cases. The conclusions in our case were read immediately after the debate was over, so I have to wonder openly here whether this does not reflect a distinct lack of transparency. How is it possible for the spokespersons of the Employers' and Workers' groups to express opinions regarding various cases which have not been agreed on a consensus basis by the groups they are supposed to represent? Why is more weight given in the conclusions to the points of view of organizations or persons who know nothing about the reality in the countries under discussion and who provided dubious and unfounded information backing up the campaign waged by the hegemonic superpower which is attacking Cuba and trying to impose an unfair blockade on the people of that country? Why are political comments made and political standpoints taken in the Committee despite the fact that they are beyond the mandate of the Committee? Why is the Committee of Experts, which is supposed to be the core of its work, ignored most of the time? Why is an inquisition-type approach taken when that is not the purpose for which the Committee was set up? Why are States not even allowed to hear about or discuss the plans being drawn up against them? Who is it with the divine power to decide who should be included in and who should be left off this famous list?

What I am talking about did not only happen to Cuba, it happened to Belarus, Venezuela, Zimbabwe, Islamic Republic of Iran, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Kenya, India, Mauritania and other developing countries. All this is part of manipulation and a disinformation campaign against these countries, being waged by the Western powers, and by the organizations and media they control.

In the report of the Committee on the Application of Standards, we are told that, of the 25 cases dealt with, 24 concern developing countries, while only one relates to a developed nation. This report seems to indicate that the core Conventions are only being violated by developing countries.

Furthermore, priority is given to freedom of association cases, to the detriment of other Conventions. Whereas major and very serious violations are occurring in developed countries, as is made clear in the report of the Committee of Experts, the so-called special paragraph and direct contact missions only ever seem to be applied in the case of developing countries.

I wonder why the Government of the hegemonic superpower, where 59 children have died from exploitative labour, has not been called before the Committee, while Cuba has been summoned to appear in connection with so-called trade unionists who do not belong to trade unions, who have not worked for years and who only receive a monetary allowance from those who support them so that they can undermine our system, despite the fact that it enjoys the full support of the Cuban people. This kind of treatment is double standards, it is hypocrisy, political manipulation, undemocratic, subjective, unfair, selective, politicized, and non-transparent.

Therefore, my delegation rejects this report, does not accept one word of the conclusions on individual cases, including Cuba, and disassociates itself from this exercise, which is deceitful from start to finish. If no radical changes are made to the procedures of this body, which has become a mechanism to work against developing countries and a court in which to put them in the dock, the manipulators will carry all the responsibility for the betrayal and failure of the Committee on the Application of Standards.
Mr. MUSEKA (Government delegate, Zimbabwe) — My delegation associates itself with the sentiments expressed by Malawi, South Africa, and Cuba.

My delegation wishes to express its concern regarding the working methods of the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards. Firstly, the methods of decision-making by the Committee leave much to be desired. In our view, the decisions of the Committee should be commonly shared by members of the Conference Committee and hence should reflect fairly the majority view expressed in the Committee instead of arbitrary conclusions by the Chairperson and his Vice-Chairpersons.

My delegation therefore feels that measures ought to be taken by the International Labour Conference to ensure that the Committee's decisions are democratic and transparent, thereby minimizing undue interference by certain sectoral interests in the operations of the Committee.

Secondly, the criteria for selecting countries to appear before the Committee should stand up to some credibility. We are extremely concerned that this year's list was predominantly made up of countries from the South – and that in itself raises eyebrows.

Thirdly, in our view, the Conference Committee ought to be a forum for constructive dialogue among the social partners. The current method of work and decision-making leaves a lot of room for subjectivity.

Fourthly, the Committee appears to be violating its established practices and tradition where its discussions are supposed to be based on the informed work of the Committee of Experts. In the case of Zimbabwe, this tradition was disregarded in pursuit of another, hidden agenda.

On the basis of the above observations, the decision by the Committee to include Zimbabwe's case in a special paragraph is inappropriate. Without awaiting the informed analysis by the Committee of Experts, the Committee proceeded to consider the case, and arrived at an inappropriate conclusion that is not backed by credible facts. Despite the fact that a very clear position taken by the Government of Zimbabwe was supported by various delegates, the Committee based its conclusions on mere political allegations submitted by the Workers' group.

To turn this Conference into a political arena is undesirable. Those who want political engagements should go to the appropriate forums. The ILO should not be used by trade unionists who are pursuing a political agenda in Zimbabwe. Let me put on record that the Government of Zimbabwe respects genuine trade unionists and it will never interfere with their activities. It is those unprincipled trade unionists who hide behind trade unionism in committing economic sabotage through mass actions that are dealt with in terms of the appropriate laws. These mass actions are ironically externally funded.

Finally, my delegation wishes to point out that the political developments in Zimbabwe are not within the purview of the ILO. Accordingly, Zimbabwe totally rejects being mentioned in a special paragraph of the Report of the Proceedings of the Committee on the Application of Standards.

Original Chinese: Mr. LIU (Government adviser and substitute delegate, China) — First of all, I would like to express my gratitude for the tireless efforts of all Governments, Employers and Workers over the past two weeks. My thanks also go to the Reporters for their detailed reports.

Just now the Non-Aligned Movement delegate, Cuba and other Government delegates expressed their serious concerns about the working methods of this Committee. In this respect, China shares a similar position with these Governments. We think that the ILO should first solicit opinions from all parties then, on this basis, consider reforming the working methods of the Committee so that this monitoring mechanism will become more fair and objective and the report and the Conclusions of this Committee will be more comprehensive and genuine. Only in this way can they truly reflect the authority of the Committee and its role in promoting ILO standards.

Original Arabic: Mr. DERBI (Government adviser and substitute delegate, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) — First of all, I would like to endorse what has just been said by the delegate from Malaysia who spoke on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

I would also like to associate myself with what has been said by my colleagues from Cuba, South Africa, Malawi and China.

We are here to pursue excellent labour standards which can guarantee rights and protect the social partners in order to establish balanced and positive labour relations.

In our developing countries, when we formulate plans and strategies we do so with the aim of promoting labour and ensuring that our people have a dignified and decent life. In order to do this we need modern and progressive legislation.

The Chairperson of the Committee on the Application of Standards has shown, during this session, that it is a standing committee which ensures supervision of the application of standards. It is therefore a very important committee, and we need to ensure that its work is followed up day by day and safeguarded, as a task which is enshrined in the Constitution of the Organization.

During this session, we discussed the Report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, which contains a number of observations relating to certain countries. However, some countries did not agree with the observations contained in the report.

This year the tripartite Committee on the Application of Standards was in fact flagrantly dominated by the Employers and the Workers. The governments of some countries were directly accused and in some cases condemned. The Governments' arguments were really not taken into consideration, and those countries that tried to defend their positions were not taken seriously. The Employers and the Workers, for their part, had ample time to put together their reports containing accusations based on expert legal opinions. All this leads us to believe that what the Governments were saying was not taken into account, especially if a Government added recent information relating to developments in its country.

This was a source of great concern for us. Singling out a country for criticism is not a positive approach, as it seems to us that the choice of countries is arbitrary and such practices are unworthy of the International Labour Organization. These choices should be based on general and clear criteria.

Furthermore, the Committee enjoins certain countries to take measures which go far beyond those
required of other countries. It seems to us that this year the Committee has taken certain rights upon itself, and exceeded its mandate. The area of legislation is the exclusive prerogative of governments. If this is to continue in future, I am convinced that the Committee will seriously exceed its mandate; it should not take the form of a tribunal. The Committee should not single out a country for humiliation, nor should it give a country the impression that it is always being targeted by sanctions.

With regard to the six countries cited in the special paragraph, allow me to express my reservations, particularly with regard to the conclusions in Part Two of the report, concerning the Equality of Treatment (Social Security) Convention, 1962 (No. 118), because I believe that there is a significant difference between the Committee on the Application of Standards and the Committee of Experts, and I do not think enough attention has been paid to that.

There is now open dialogue between ourselves and the Organization, and I think it is only through dialogue that we can achieve positive and lasting solutions.

Mr. SAHA (Workers’ adviser delegate, India) — While commending the report of the Committee on the Application of Standards, I have a few relevant points to make. All member States should have an equal moral obligation to abide by all ILO Conventions, whether ratified or not, as provided for in the ILO’s Constitution. As such, while examining complaints in respect of violations of ratified Conventions in various countries, the Committee must, at the same time, examine complaints of labour rights violations in various countries all over the world, irrespective of ratification.

This is all the more important given the fact that non-ratification of Conventions is being used as an escape route for the unquestioned violation of labour standards and onslaughts on labour rights by many governments, both in developed and developing countries, and to avoid scrutiny by the ILO Committee. Alongside this, an apparent distortion occurs in the overall picture of standards violation, as if all such violations took place only in developing countries.

For example, the United States, the economic and military superpower, has so far ratified 12 Conventions out of 184, that is, 6.5 per cent. None of the core Conventions, including the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), etc. have been ratified by the United States. A salient fact, 80 per cent of the working population are deprived of their right to organize and their right to collective bargaining. The Workers’ delegate from New York observed in this plenary session of the International Labour Conference that workers are threatened or dismissed, if they join or form a union. Amongst many other cases, let me refer to that of United States prisoners, who are used as forced labour and made to work for private companies for as little as one-fifth of the market rate.

The super powers are arrogating basic human rights in their own countries while sermonizing the world community on democracy, labour standards and what not. Can hypocrisy go further? Hence, the urgent need of the hour is for the ILO to undertake a serious study on labour standards violations in all countries, both developed and developing, independent of the ratification of Conventions and submit a separate report to the next session of the International Labour Conference for scrutiny by the Committee on the Application of Standards, in addition to its usual scrutiny of violations of ratified Conventions.

(countinued)
The trade union agenda is clear and transparent. We want to see workers’ rights fully implemented in all countries. We reaffirm that the work of the Committee is totally impartial. There has clearly been a visible improvement in its methods of work.

We succeeded in discussing a high number of important cases. Such cases were selected in a very balanced way, according to the criteria of the document on the working methods of the Committee, in order to ensure a balanced geographical distribution and coverage of a range of Conventions.

Unfortunately, we experienced restrictions in working time which prevented us from examining more cases. I hope that next year we will be able to eliminate such problems in order to improve our work.

As stated, a special paragraph was devoted to six particularly serious cases of violations that directly affected the quality of life of millions of women, men and child workers, as well as their trade union rights.

We are confident that the work of the Committee of Experts and the Office of the ILO as a whole can help to support governments to overcome such violations as soon as possible. For this reason, there is a need for full cooperation and commitment from governments and social partners.

We held a special sitting on Burma and I should like to take the opportunity today, in this short space of time, to say that the trade unions are extremely concerned about the imprisonment of Nobel prize winner, Aung San Suu Kyi, and the other NLD activists. Today is Aung San Suu Kyi’s birthday and we had hoped that she would be able to celebrate it in total freedom with her family, and her people rather than in a dark junta prison. Many trade unionists are also in prison in Myanmar. We are near you, M’s. Aung San Suu Kyi. We therefore support the conclusions of the special sitting and particularly the political points raised in the conclusions on the discussion of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87). We stressed in those conclusions that we call on the Burmese Government to release, immediately and unconditionally, all political and trade union prisoners, to give a clear and unconditional order to the army to stop forced labour and to show willing to start a real dialogue for democracy.

We have asked and requested the Director-General of the International Labour Office to request governments, employers and trade unions to provide further reports on the instruments used and measures taken to implement the Convention fully. This is because we have noticed the inconsistencies of many governments and employers in terms of implementing such Conventions.

Myanmar is a key case for the ILO as a whole. Both Burma and Belarus have consistently failed, over several years, to implement Convention No. 87. The ICFTU has recently submitted a special complaint on these violations.

We would like to thank all of the governments that accepted in a positive spirit the outcome and the conclusions of the discussion on their cases, especially in those cases where a decision was taken to send a direct contact mission.

This Committee has also considered ways to overcome, in practice and in real life, the violation of the ILO Conventions. The confident, positive acceptance of ILO technical assistance is therefore an important step forward.

Finally, I would like to express my concern about the lack of support for the workers’ proposal on the case of Colombia. The situation in Colombia is far from improving. On the contrary, it is deteriorating even further and we call on governments and employers to be open, at the next sitting of the Governing Body, which will be held tomorrow, to the requests of the workers for a commission of inquiry.

Finally, I would like to thank the Chairperson of the Committee, as well as the Vice-Chairpersons, the Reporter and all the staff who have supported our work during the year. I hope that next year we will be able to see some improvements and the successful results of the discussion we have had today.

Mr. LE (Government adviser and substitute delegate, Viet Nam) — I have asked for the floor to speak on behalf of Viet Nam, as a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, to associate this country with a statement made by the distinguished Government representative of Malaysia, Chairperson of the Movement.

At the same time, I would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm that Viet Nam has always attached great importance to the work of the Committee on the Application of Standards and the Committee of Experts which can, among other things, contribute immensely to the implementation of the ILO standards.

Mr. TROTMAN (Workers’ delegate, Barbados; Chairperson of the Workers’ group) — The workers of Barbados and indeed the Workers generally in this Conference wish to congratulate the Committee on the Application of Standards for the work that it has done. Workers have very few chances to have governments listen to them in their own country or, indeed, in the international community. And it is therefore a very good thing that within the body of the ILO we have the supervisory mechanism which permits international governments, international employers and workers from around the world, to be able to listen to and hear what the workers’ views are regarding violations of this Institution.

The International Labour Organization is a rules-based organization and if people have joined the Organization, they ought to be prepared to live by the rules that govern the Organization. The Organization’s rules are very clear in some of the fundamental Conventions which become the basis for the work of the Committee on the Application of Standards. And those governments which do not wish to abide by those rules should say so and say so clearly and not obfuscate the issues by language, or terms, or behaviour that would be confusing.

Whenever governments violate fundamental Conventions, they should be required to answer. When workers at work violate fundamental workplace rules, they are made to answer — they are dismissed, they are suspended, they lose their livelihoods. We are not asking governments to lose their livelihoods, because we are not speaking to the political issue at all. But we are asking them to answer, to answer to the people who put them there and to answer to the jury that is the world, regarding where they stand on fundamental issues. There cannot be anything wrong with that and so the Workers’ group will not apologize to anybody for the position we take in defence of the workers...
around the world. And it has to be clearly understood which government likes it and which government does not like it. We have to be very clear to understand that when we bring a government before a supervisory mechanism, not once, not twice, but sometimes 15 consecutive years, 20 consecutive years, we do not do so because we dislike that government or because we dislike the leaders of the government. I surely would not be party to an arrangement that seeks to pick on a country because it is small — because then my own country would be the first to be picked on since we are among the smallest. I would not agree with anybody to pick on a country because it is developing, because my country would be picked on because it is developing like many other countries. But if my country is small, and if my country wishes to develop, if it chooses not to adhere to the rules of this Organization then I would agree with anyone who brings it before the Court, that is the Committee on the Freedom of Association or the Committee on the Application of Standards, and it would stand justly condemned in my eyes if it cannot justify its position.

And I say that for my country, I say that for all the workers' organizations around the world and I say it without apology.

I cannot accept, that the Workers' group closes its mind to the arguments which are submitted by governments. It is clear at the workings of the Committee on Freedom of Association, it is clear at the workings of the Committee on the Application of Standards, that when a government brings new information, that is transparent information, to these organs, that we have sought to accommodate those governments.

Where we have been unable to accommodate those governments is because we believe that sometimes the information that is brought is too little, too late, and we have classic examples like Burma, where this is so, like Zimbabwe, where this is so. And I do not say that out of any dislike for one country or for another, but I say so because it represents the fundamental sentiment that we in the Workers' group have, and that the delegation of workers from Barbados has.

And when we speak, we do not speak to the political orientation of any government. We may not always be in conformity with that form of politics, but we do not speak towards the politics but rather we speak towards governments' and employers' treatment of workers and of people generally. And let it be understood that wherever we see inhumanity, wherever we see inhumanity by man against man, or by woman against woman, or by woman against man — we have a responsibility to speak out against it and again I say we shall not apologize.

Mr. ANAND (Employers' adviser delegate, India) — I had no intention of intervening until I came to this debate and received the documents this morning. Sir Roy has introduced a very high degree of emotionalism into the picture, but, in my opinion, he has not been able to demolish the case built up by the distinguished representatives from Malaysia and other countries, so far as improving the working methods of this Committee is concerned.

No one, neither I as an employer nor, I believe, the Employers' group as a whole, begrudges the examination of specific cases. However, the complaints brought before the Committee must be authenticated, and unauthenticated complaints should not be examined to the Committee without verification.

Last year, while discussing the Global Report, an example was given of a country like mine, where trade unions were being suppressed in some regions by the Government. This example was contrary to the truth, and I challenged it. That such information should then appear in final reports gives everyone a bad name, be they trade unions, or governments or employers, and I feel that any information received by this Committee should be authenticated before it is used.

With specific reference to this morning's report, I, like Sir Roy Trotman, have many years of experience, but it seems to me that there is a lingering doubt in the minds of some members of the Committee as to the credibility of information supplied by governments in some cases, most recently that of my country. India, the representative of which spoke with great vehemence in the Committee. I do not propose to waste time on this, but I believe it does merit systematic attention, since it concerns both the principle and the success of tripartism and social dialogue. If we are to enjoy credibility as an institution, we must ensure that the reports of our Committee are based on fact.

The report contains a sentence which recalls that the Government could request technical assistance from the ILO for collecting statistics. This does not help anybody. Nowhere in the whole report does it say what is wrong with the date produced by the Government of India. India is a vast country. There are some proposals for legislation on collecting statistics, for the system to be computerized, for land records, personal records — so many statistics! However, if the Committee has any specific suggestions, I am sure we, as employers, will not only support our Government but, if appropriate, urge it to accept the new standards set by the ILO.

I want my friends to see that there will always be some groups of Workers who do not see eye to eye with the government. However, the ILO must show due respect for the institutional presentation of data by governments. If data is presented and someone wishes to challenge it, then that challenge can take place in the country as a whole, against a background of vibrant tripartism, such as we have in India.

I do not wish to take up more time, but I will add that India, as a democratic country, does not believe in sweeping problems under the carpet, which is why you will find complaints being raised from time to time in ILO forums. In the end, while I support the important work of the Committee, I nevertheless feel that its role needs to be re-examined and made more specific. National tripartite structures should be used more widely to examine local complaints, which could then be brought to the Committee for closer scrutiny if necessary. Finally, there must be total respect for data supplied by governments after tripartite meetings in their own countries.

Original French: M. HAJA YANDI (Workers' delegate, Burundi) — The Workers’ group has followed with great interest the fruitful, very animated and, at times, stormy exchanges, as mentioned by the spokesperson of the Workers’ group of the Committee on the Application of Standards.

We greatly appreciate the skill, ability and experience shown by the Chairperson of the Committee, and I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate him on this.

The first mission of the ILO was, and still is, to set standards with a view to promoting decent work
throughout the world. The universal nature of the standards adopted during sessions of the ILC is still sacred. Consequently, these standards should be applied by all member States.

Unfortunately, it appears that not only are many Conventions not ratified by States, but, worse still, even ratified Conventions are not being applied.

The Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87) and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98) are the first Conventions to suffer from this phenomenon in the so-called developing countries. This is the case, for example, in my country, Burundi; even if it is not on the list of individual cases. But this is also the case in many other countries which appear on the list, including Zimbabwe.

Therefore, we could ask ourselves whether the gross violations and freedoms which are registered here and there of workers' rights in African countries should be ignored. Therefore, if we are told that 30-odd workers of Zimbabwe are on provisional release — which means that they have spent time in prison — and if we are told that some union leaders are given death threats, while workers are arrested, imprisoned and tortured, can we say that this is a situation in which fundamental rights and principles at work are respected?

Although the majority of countries on the list of individual cases are in the South, this does not mean to say that there are no violations of standards in the North — quite the opposite. However, it is clear that many improvements are necessary in the South.

The Government representatives of States which appear on that list should not be frustrated. On the contrary, they should commit themselves to cooperate with ILO experts so as to draft labour laws in accordance with ratified Conventions and to ensure that their provisions are implemented.

Workers call upon Government representatives to adopt an approach which involves cooperation and progress and to avoid confrontation.

As regards working methods, undoubtedly, some improvements are necessary. However, as regards the drawing up of a list of individual cases, this should be firmly supported. Indeed, this makes it possible to acknowledge and identify cases of violations of labour standards to present them to member States during the International Labour Conference with a view to obtaining improvements and not frustration.

All member States' governments should make firm commitments, not only to ratify Conventions, but also to implement the provisions of international labour standards, without any deviations.

The Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations must be encouraged and must press ahead with its noble monitoring mission. The high-level of cooperation between the Committee of Experts and the Committee on the Applications of Standards of the Conference has been greatly appreciated.

The cases of violations of labour standards in Africa are of great concern. We congratulate the governments of African States which continue to make progress in ratifying and applying labour standards. We would urge all the governments of African States which were specifically referred to during the ILC to work towards improving conditions of work with a view to promoting production, productivity and the provision of decent work.

Original Russian: M. M. MALEVICH (Government adviser and substitute delegate, Belarus) — Our delegation would also like to express the concern already expressed by the representative of Malaysia on behalf of the Non-aligned Movement and by other speakers supporting what he said. This relates of course to the insufficient objectiveness of the Committee on the Application of Standards in respect of the cases of certain countries. In this connection we fully share the opinion expressed by Mr. Cortebeeck, when he spoke on 12 June in the Committee on the Application of Standards and referred to a two-speed approach and double standards taken by the Employers' representatives in respect of Convention No. 87.

There is no doubt that in Belarus, where more than 90 per cent of workers are members of trade unions, and where the economic situation is relatively good, and where freedom of association is almost 100 per cent observed, it is rather strange that our case had a special paragraph given to it. That is something with which we cannot agree. At the same time, the Committee showed surprising understanding when it looked at certain other cases, where we were talking about not only long-standing and appalling violations of workers' rights, and not only the right to freedom of association but also about their lives being in danger. Today the spokesperson of the workers' group has expressed more or less the same point of view.

We believe that the approach of the Committee on the Application of Standards is unacceptable; we believe that it is compromising this respected Organization, and we think it should operate on the principles of dialogue, impartiality and openness.

We believe, and other delegates have said the same thing, that we urgently now need to look at further improvements of the working method of the Committee on the Application of Standards so as to ensure that we have this rostrum of the ILO for the purpose for which it was established and not for political aims.

Original French: M. OULD MOHAMED LEMINE (Government delegate, Mauritania) — I would like to associate myself with the statement of Malaysia on behalf of the non-aligned countries. We also believe that the working methods of the Committee give rise to legitimate concerns, and that these methods should be reviewed in order to re-establish the credibility of this Organization. The establishment of the list of individual cases should be based on transparent objective criteria, the allegations made should be within the very strict legal framework of the Conventions, and should not spill over into political, or indeed partisan observations and accusations, and should be based on the work of the Committee of Experts. This should be a genuine tripartite Committee, for the moment it is purely bipartite, because the points of view of the governments are not taken into account.

The Committee should also bear in mind the fact that it is not a court, as the report of the Committee reminded us, but rather it is a body for dialogue, constructive dialogue, which should set out to promote respect for labour standards. I do not think that the Committee should hastily make allegations which are unfounded, simply because someone has made a statement to the Committee. I think that unproved allegations should not be aired in the Committee, it is not constructive and it is not the job of the Committee.
Echoing many other delegates who have already spoken, I would say that the way in which the conclusions are drafted does not inspire confidence. The measures taken by my Government in applying the recommendations of the Committee were not taken into account, nor was the spirit of openness and cooperation which my Government showed. The Committee also ignored the very difficult situation that my country is experiencing at a time when its case is being discussed, and I think that everybody will understand that if there had not been a change of Government, we would be in a situation where labour standards would be, in the best of cases, simply suspended.

I think that the worst thing in Mauritania's case is the punishment which has been meted out to my Government, simply because our delegate put a question relating to the basis of the conclusions, and the allegations and comments contained therein which were unproven. The Worker spokesperson took the floor and proposed that the conclusions which had been proposed be included in a special paragraph. He was supported in this by the Employer spokesperson. Everyone is free of course to act as they wish, there can be accusations of not taking things seriously, but I think that the approach really undermines the credibility of the Committee and the Organization because if the Committee's measures of punishment, of sanctions, can vary so much on an arbitrary basis, not on the basis of any new facts, but simply because a Government delegate dared to ask a question and it was therefore decided that it would not be a direct contacts mission that would be sent, but rather there would be a special paragraph in the report. I think that these measures do not contribute to the promotion of labour standards, as I think that this debate has shown. The Committee needs to really look at how it works in order to endow its conclusions with the maximum moral authority, and not waste all the resources which are invested in terms of time and finance in this Committee.

I would like to draw the attention of the secretariat to the written changes submitted by the delegate of Mauritania. Those changes which have been submitted have not yet been reflected in the report, and I would wish those changes to be made.

Mr. THAN (Government delegate, Myanmar) — Allow me to offer a few comments on the report of the Committee on the Application of Standards, contained in Provisional Record No. 24, Part Three. I had already explained, in clear and precise terms, the position of my Government in my statements at the meeting of the Committee on the Application of Standards on 7 and 14 June 2003. These positions remain the same, so I shall refrain from recounting them because of the time constraint. I recall that the Committee on the Application of Standards welcomed and expressed its support for the joint plan of action to eliminate forced labour, and could open the way for the implementation of the joint plan of action to be tried well, and how we are endeavouring to improve conditions to the extent possible, under the prevailing circumstances, and to find ways and means to take appropriate interim steps.

In this context, it bears reiterating here the position of my delegation with regard to the Chairperson's summing up on Myanmar's observance of Convention No. 87, the essence of the whole question is that Myanmar, a country in transition to democracy, is doing its utmost to promote the rights, interests and welfare of workers, as well as to find ways and means to take appropriate interim steps.

Regarding the proposal of the Committee summarizing the measures taken by my Government in applying the recommendations of the Committee, make it a special paragraph. I think that this debate has shown that these measures do not contribute to the promotion of labour standards, as I think that this debate has shown. The Committee needs to really look at how it works in order to endow its conclusions with the maximum moral authority, and not waste all the resources which are invested in terms of time and finance in this Committee.

In this context, it bears reiterating here the position of my delegation with regard to the Chairperson's summing up on Myanmar's observance of Convention No. 87. My delegation reserves its position on the substance of the Chairperson's conclusions, as well as on placing those conclusions in a special paragraph.

We believe that when a member State is doing its best to implement the core Conventions of the ILO under the prevailing circumstances, it should be encouraged to continue its efforts, rather than be criticized or censured. One has to be realistic. These issues cannot be resolved overnight. We have to deal with these issues step by step.

I should therefore like to underscore a positive and constructive point, which I believe we all share. Let us accentuate the positive, let us take a cooperative approach rather than a confrontational one. In closing, allow me also to stress Myanmar's support for the statement by the Government of Malaysia on the reform of the working methods of the Committee on the Application of Standards.

Ms. MISNER (Government adviser and substitute delegate, United States; speaking on behalf of the IMEC group) — As you noted, I have the very great honour to speak on behalf of the IMEC group. IMEC endorses the report of the Committee on the Application of Standards. IMEC welcomes the innovations that were introduced this year. We agree that the discussion on the Committee's working methods should continue, with the next session of the International Labour Conference, and we look to the Office to facilitate that discussion.

IMEC strongly believes that any further adjustments in the Committee's working methods should
have the effect of increasing the efficiency, transparency and objectivity of its work, and thereby enhancing its credibility. That being said, IMEC would not wish to see any changes that would damage the Committee's standing as the conscience of the International Labour Organization.

The PRESIDENT — There are no further speakers. However, I have two requests for the right of reply. The first is from Mr. Matombo, Workers' delegate, Zimbabwe, who has requested the right to reply to the Government of Zimbabwe. The second is from the Government delegate from Zimbabwe, who has requested the right of reply to Mr. Roy Trotman.

Mr. MATOMBO (Workers' delegate, Zimbabwe) — The Committee of Experts' comments related to the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98); the tripartite Committee on the Application of Standards examined all the issues relating to this Convention, as it applies in law and in practice, but it is this second assessment that interests the Zimbabwean workers — all they want to know about is how the Convention is applied.

In fact, the Zimbabwean workers have not enjoyed their right to organize and this is the basic issue and our observation. The Workers of Zimbabwe are the ones who are most aware of the circumstances that face them. The suggestion that the workers of Zimbabwe are driven by an external political agenda is misleading and in any case would be dismissed by any sane person. These are the types of threats that we have learned to live with. What we require is for the Government of Zimbabwe to apply this Convention in full. If they do, then we will have no problem, but to suggest, as the Government does, that we are a political party, is untrue. We are not a political party.

In fact, the Zimbabwean workers are suffering. The Zimbabwean workers require their freedom, and are demanding, like any other person elsewhere in the world, the right to organize.

We are the ones who are being beaten, the people who are being imprisoned, the people who are being tortured and we are saying that the Government should stop this and put into practice Convention No. 98.

Government delegate, Zimbabwe — The intervention by the Workers' delegate from Barbados confirms what we have been saying namely that the issues that they are raising lie essentially in the political domain. Their solution, or resolution, is being sought under the aegis of committed authorities in that relevant sphere.

I refer specifically to the issue raised by the Workers' delegate from Burundi of massive arrests and killings of workers in Zimbabwe, which Mr. Matombo also touched upon. I think these are just sensational allegations gleaned from tabloid newspapers. In Zimbabwe, we, together with the Workers' and Employers' delegates and with the assistance of the ILO, have carried out a joint review of our legislative reforms. This is essentially the document that we have placed before the Committee for it to examine and to come up with a well thought out answer.

But nothing seems to have happened. All we ask is that the evidence is submitted to the Committee.

The PRESIDENT — We shall proceed with the adoption of the report.
Original Spanish: M. FUNES DE RIOJA (Employers’ adviser and substitute delegate, Argentina; Chairperson of the Employers’ group) — There are three questions that I would like to touch on briefly. The first is that the Employers have followed, and will continue to follow, all the provisions of the Constitution as and the Standing Order as regarding the application and observance of ratified Conventions, particularly the core Conventions, and our compliance with this has been seen in many bodies.

It is clear that the procedures and methods of the Committee of Application of Standards can be improved, and there is commitment on the Employers’ side, both in the Conference and in the Governing Body, to do this. However, we feel bound to point out that within the framework of the present provisions we are convinced that decisions are taken objectively, transparently, realistically and without any political or party bias. They are not taken in the shadows, and they are not decisions that result from plotting and manipulation.

I am making this statement on behalf of the entire Employers’ group, because we have felt from previous statements that there are questions that cannot be ignored. The Employers’ group fully supports the conclusions of the Committee on the Applications of Standards and supports the application of the existing mechanisms in all the cases in question. Obviously, the Governments have pointed out, and as we have pointed out frequently, we are prepared to reform and modernize and update these procedures where necessary, within the framework of the appropriate bodies.

The President — I thank the Chairperson of the Employers’ group. I thank Mr. Trotman for notifying the Conference of this complaint under article 26 of the ILO Constitution and in conformity with the Constitution this complaint will be submitted to the Governing Body.

I give the floor to a Government delegate of Belarus.

Original Russian: Government delegate, Belarus — I simply wanted to express my regret for the fact that the Workers’ and Employers’ representatives seem to be rejecting dialogue and seeking needless confrontation. I am very distressed that they have not already taken into account the efforts made by the Government of Belarus, which were made clear in the statement by our Minister of Labour and Social Protection. Problems and issues cannot be dealt with in this way or, rather, they should not be dealt with in this way within this respected and distinguished Organization.

Closing Speeches

The President — To conclude this 91st Session of the International Labour Conference, I would like to invite the Vice-Presidents to address this plenary assembly. Before giving the floor to Mr. Muhaisin, Minister of Labour for the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Government Vice-President of the Conference, I would like to express my sympathy on my own behalf, and on that of the Conference, at the recent death of Mr. Muhaisin’s father.

I now give the floor to Mr. Muhaisin.

Original Arabic: M. Muhaisin (Minister of Labour, Jordan; Government Vice-President of the Conference) — At the outset I wish to express my gratitude to the Government group, in particular to the Asia and Pacific group, for giving me the honour of serving as one of the Vice-Presidents of this 91st Session of the Conference.

This was an historic Conference by virtue of the prominence of the guests of honour it hosted and by virtue of the diversified and important subjects it dealt with, including the Report of the Director-General, Working out of poverty.

As I listened to the statements and comments made by the tripartite constituents during the discussions of the Director-General’s Report, I was deeply touched and impressed by the way in which major global problems were brought into focus, discussed by delegates from all parts of the world in their concerted manner on the basis of common principles, and yet approached from various perspectives, giving an opportunity for each group to fashion its own programme of action to suit its own circumstances, without infringing international norms and standards.

I can state with full conviction that these proceedings have increased my appreciation of the ILO’s role of creating awareness of major global problems, stimulating action in response to them and being a catalyst in their solution to promote social justice.

I was during the first sitting of this Conference that I became aware of the key to the success of this esteemed Organization. That key quite simply is you, the delegates, your dedication, your commitment and, most of all, your cooperation based on the reality that the social partners are bound by common factors that necessitate dialogue to achieve consensus, whenever and wherever possible.

I recall the intervention made by the chairperson for the Employers’ group, Mr. Funes de Rioja, who declared his group’s six priorities for the next biennium as employment and job creation, continued modernization of ILO standards, promotion of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, IPEC, social security, safety and health, and the strengthening of the social partners and sectoral activities. He concluded by appealing to the governments to “support at least a zero real growth budget” for the next biennium.

The statement that followed his was made by the spokesperson for the Workers’ group, Mr. Blondel, who called on all delegations to adopt the programme and budget as submitted, and concluded with the following words of wisdom: saying that “it is better to devote money to the world of work, which is a world of peace, than to the armaments industry, which is a world of war”. Coming from a region that has known no peace for nearly half a century, our hopes and aspirations continue to centre on the achievement of a comprehensive and just peace in the Middle East. Our Conference has demonstrated the important role of the ILO in alleviating the hardships facing workers and employers in the occupied Arab territories, and I will take back with me the memory of this historic session, coupled with the conviction that the participants at this Conference, be they Governments, Employers or Workers, have a sense of determination to uphold and enhance the noble principles of the ILO.

I wish to recall some remarks contained in the address by His Majesty, King Abdullah II bin al-Hussein, to the Conference. He said that the ILO
recognizes a fundamental truth about our world in that work and working people are at the heart of global prosperity. His Majesty added that no country can make it alone, and that for developed and developing nations alike, progress at the national level demands progress at the global level as well. Achieving such progress will require a true partnership between both developed and developing countries, a partnership based on common interests, our interdependence and our shared responsibilities.

King Abdullah went on to say, and I quote, “Only such a partnership can deliver the global justice that is required, and encourage developing countries to embark upon needed political and social reforms.” I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to the President and the Vice-Presidents for their generosity, cooperation and team spirit. I am particularly grateful because they had to deal with the complications caused by my sudden departure because of the death of my father. I also want to thank all those who kindly sent me messages of condolence.

I also would like to extend my thanks to the Director-General and his team of very efficient ILO officials, including the Clerk of the Conference, Mr. Damen, and his colleagues. They were very ready and able to provide assistance when required. My thanks also go to the interpreters, whose work was highly appreciated. In conclusion, I will just say, God bless you all and may you have a safe journey back to your countries.

Mr. NOAKES (Employers' delegate, Australia; Employer Vice-President of the Conference, Australia) — I should like first of all to say that it has been an honour and a privilege to act as Employer Vice-President of this 91st Session of the International Labour Conference. In addition, it has been an honour for my country and for my organization. I am grateful to my employer colleagues who supported my candidacy for this position. It has been an experience I shall never forget. I should also like to thank the President for his wise leadership of this session of the Conference, as well as the other Vice-Presidents, Mr. Muhaisin and Mr. Wojcik, for their cooperation and the friendly manner in which we have been able to work together. This has been a remarkable session, one with a very full and rich agenda, and one which has displayed to the utmost the essential qualities of this Organization. I refer of course to tripartism, social dialogue and consensus. All of the work done by the Conference has been characterized by these qualities. In addition, all of the work of the Conference has been important, but time does not permit me to address every aspect. I want to mention in particular the work of the Committees, which represent the engine room of the Conference. The Committee on the Employment Relationship has achieved outstanding results, which demonstrate that, given a commitment to dialogue, agreements acceptable to all parties can be reached even on the most difficult of subjects. I congratulate all of those involved. The Committee on Human Resources has also achieved excellent results, which provide a sound foundation for revisiting this subject next year. The Committee on Occupational Safety and Health has developed a new theme, involving an integrated approach to standard setting, and this holds great promise for the future.

It is to be hoped that other subjects will be dealt with in the same manner. The Committee on Sea-farers also dealt with a difficult subject and also produced excellent results. We should not overlook the work performed by the Committee on the Application of Standards which, year after year, performs outstanding work on complex and demanding issues. Nor should we forget the Credentials Committee which, in carrying out its mandate, performs tasks which are fundamental to the success of this Conference. My 20 years of experience of this Conference and this Organization have reaffirmed and strengthened my belief in their importance, in their unique qualities and in the vital nature of the work they perform. We must all continue to work together to maintain and strengthen their place in the world and the contribution they make to harmony between employers, workers and governments.

Highlights of my association with the Conference and the Organization have been the Vice-Chairmanship of three Conference committees, the adoption of the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and my work for the Governing Body, particularly with respect to the Committee on Freedom of Association. I hope that in these and other ways I have been able to make a contribution to the achievement of the aims and objectives of this Organization, and I hope that I shall continue to be able to do so.

Finally, I should like to thank the Director-General for his leadership of the Organization and for his role as Secretary-General of the Conference. I would also like to thank his staff for their dedication, skill and professionalism. In particular, I should like to mention the work performed by the Clerk of the Conference, Mr. Damen. It has been a pleasure to work with all of them during this Conference. I also wish to thank the interpreters who routinely perform extraordinary feats under conditions that are never easy and are sometimes extremely difficult.

Mr. WOJCIK (Workers' adviser and substitute delegate, Poland; Worker Vice-President of the Conference) — It has been a great honour and privilege for me, and for the Polish workers, to serve as Vice-President during this session of the International Labour Conference, which has deliberated on many crucial issues for the workers of the world. We had the honour to listen to the various voices of President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa and His Majesty King Abdullah II of the Kingdom of Jordan, as well as, just before the Conference actually started, President Lula da Silva of Brazil. All of them spoke about the need to win the war on want, a powerful message which comes across to us insistently from all different corners of the world.

I would like to congratulate the Director-General of the ILO, who has chosen Working out of poverty as the theme of the first Conference after his re-election. I think that this theme should guide his second mandate as leader of this Organization.

Innovative ideas were proposed during this gathering. I was particularly impressed by the speech of my fellow Workers' delegate, Mr. Sasamori of Japan, who envisaged the setting up of a special fund to which member States would donate 1 per cent of their military expenditure as a way of pooling efforts to reduce poverty, create stable employment and establish social safety nets. We need this mix of vision and commitment, this idea of the new social pact which will enable us to create decent jobs with rights for all.
One crucial element of decent work is equality in various forms. The Global Report, Time for equality at work, provided the occasion for a lively debate on tackling inequalities in various forms, from the gender gap in wages to the racial bias against minority groups, indigenous people, and so on.

I should also mention the valuable Report of the Director-General on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories, the fruitful discussions on this topic in the special sitting and quite importantly, the statement that the Workers’ group unanimously endorsed on Iraq, as a matter of urgency, with a view to asking the ILO to send a mission offering technical support and assistance to the country, and ensuring protection of workers’ wages and the use of oil and other national resources solely for the benefit of the Iraqi people.

But it is mostly through its institutional committees that our Conference gave us concrete indications on how to move forward in the many different areas of the contemporary world of work. I am, for example, very pleased to note the adoption of the revised Seafarers’ Identity Documents Convention. This was originally proposed by the IMO. The fact that the ILO has been able to respond so quickly and flexibly to what is perceived as an urgent issue is to the credit of this Organization. The issues were complex, sensitive and politically highly charged. However, in a mere two weeks, a comprehensive package, which seeks to balance the needs of seafarers and the requirements of national security, has been produced. It is our hope and expectation that these provisions will facilitate transit for seafarers, allowing them shore leave without a visa.

A rule of the new Convention is of particular importance for us. If the system is to work, we need widespread ratification accompanied by technical cooperation. The Workers’ group, also commend the resolution on decent work for seafarers and will ensure that the Governing Body will continue to consider this issue.

The Committee on Human Resources successfully concluded its first round of discussions on the revision of the Human Resources Development Recommendation, 1975 (No. 150), by adopting a crucial set of conclusions. They reaffirm the right of all to education and training, the need for social dialogue, especially through collective bargaining, in designing and implementing successful policies on education, training and lifelong learning, but also the need for a comprehensive set of economic and social policies to promote developmental issues.

The draft of the proposed new instrument encompasses a wide spectrum of policy issues, from the need to set a national framework to the need to address gender and other discriminations in access to education and training, the role of MNEs in transferring knowledge, and the necessary synergies that have to be built between the ILO and the international financial and lending institutions in order to help developing countries bridge the widening gap in the access to the fundamental right to lifelong learning. I am confident that next year the ILO will reach consensus on an innovative and useful instrument.

The Committee on the Employment Relationship, after an intense debate, has provided a clear outcome. Its conclusions confirm what the workers have been saying all along. The employment relationship is vital, but attention must be paid to its scope. Too many workers are not receiving their due protection, for various reasons, because their employment relationship is disguised or ambiguous, or because it is not clear who should bear the employer’s obligations. The Committee clearly calls for an international labour standard in this area, for mechanisms to ensure access to protection for all, and for technical assistance and further studies. Even if further work is necessary for the adoption of a standard, we are pleased to recognize that the Committee has placed this Organization on the path where we want it to be.

The Committee on Occupational Safety and Health was charged with the huge task of providing proposals for the ILO’s action plan for the promotion of health and safety at work. I am pleased to see its positive results.

The Committee’s conclusions refer among other things to the development of an instrument which will establish a promotional framework for occupational safety and health. Other measures envisaged are the development of national preventive strategies, international awareness-raising campaigns and support for the International Workers’ Memorial Day on 28 April each year. Recommendations to the Governing Body were also made regarding the review of standards as well as areas for possible new instruments on musculoskeletal injuries, and on biological and psychosocial hazards.

I commend the invaluable work of the Committee on the Application of Standards for its fair treatment of topical issues, for example in its general discussion on the protection of wages Convention and Recommendation and in its analysis of the non-application of ratified Conventions. In six cases of persistent non-compliance, the Committee decided that the situation was so grave as to warrant the inclusion of its conclusions in a special paragraph. These cases concern the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Belarus, Zimbabwe, Myanmar, Mauritania and Cameroon. Two of the cases involved continued failure to apply the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), by Myanmar and Belarus.

For three cases, the Committee requested the Government to receive a direct contacts mission (Cuba, Venezuela and Guatemala). I sincerely hope that in these cases progress will be made and that next year, these violations will not be recorded again.

My words of hope are not merely an empty wish. I know from first hand how things can change for the better. Twenty-two years ago, I was locked up in a prison cell because of my belief in these same principles of rights of the ILO. Nobody believed then that change would come about so quickly. Now that we are more fully integrated in this Organization, let me repeat my message, that it is vital to keep hope and never lose faith. Solidarnosc, my organization, was created in 1980 and we immediately took responsibility for the enormous tasks facing Poland at the time. We are aware that not all the changes since then have been positive, given the rapid pace of change. That is why we recall and emphasize the true role of unions in any country, the need to invest more in the protection of workers and the people at large, as well as the fundamental value of solidarity.

Our hope has to perempt to other fields as well. It is time to create synergistic efforts to fight poverty. The climate of friendly relations that will develop among Government, Employer and Worker representatives has to be continued. If we do this, we will succeed.
I would like to conclude by thanking M r. Wamalwa for the way in which he has led the work of the Conference, and my colleagues, Vice-Presidents M uhaiain and Noakes, with whom I have shared many interesting hours.

My special thanks go to M r. D amen and the interpreters for their outstanding cooperation, and many, many thanks to the staff of the Office for their prompt assistance, as well as to my colleagues of the Workers’ group, my friends, who chose me, to deliver, on their behalf, such an important commitment. Thank you very much. God bless you.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL — I want to congratulate you, President Wamalwa, for your great stewardship of our Conference, together with the Vice-Presidents, M essrs. Noakes, Wojcik and M inister M uhaiain of J ordan, to whom I also offer my very deep condolences.

They have guided us through what has been, I think, an extraordinarily productive session of the Conference. The respect and courtesy that they have accorded to delegates has enabled this whole complex machine to proceed smoothly and efficiently, and I particularly thank them for that.

I would also like to congratulate the Chairpersons of the Committees and all the group and Government spokespersons, for guiding complex, technical debates to such successful conclusions. Their contribution is vital to our work and their dedication and concentrated efforts were really outstanding. I would like to thank my friends, M r. R oy Trotman for the Workers and M r. F unes de R ioja, for the Employers, for their work throughout the Conference.

Of course, I would like to thank everyone. Through the many formal and informal meetings during the Conference, everyone has played a role in shaping what we have achieved and I think that is what I perceive at the end of this session of the Conference, talking to many of you, a sort of a positive energy, because so many people contributed in the different committees to the various things we have agreed and voted upon.

That, of course, has an impact on the atmosphere here, but also on the Office, in a synergy of feeling that we have done productive work.

I would also like to thank the staff of the ILO. This Conference could not function without the exceptional professionalism and sheer hard work of a large number of people before and during the event. I am very proud of all of them, those that you do see, but also the many, many more that you don’t. I particularly thank our teams of interpreters and translators. The issues we discuss are complex and delicate and ensuring that we all understand each other is vital. Also, the various support services, not least the printing and text processing units, the technical departments, the communication departments and all those who, in different ways, are involved in the Conference.

I have to say that, in the last few days, I visited the support services. I wanted to see first hand how things worked and to talk to the people working until 2 o'clock in the morning, 3 o'clock in the morning, 4 o'clock in the morning, so that, sometimes a couple of hours later, delegates could have their documents on the table.

Excuse me for talking about such mundane things, but I truly have to make visible the incredible amount of work that goes on during the Conference to ensure that we service delegates well, that things are done on time, that documents are available on the following day, that the translations are there and that, consequently, everything can happen in the extraordinary way that all of the ILO staff make happen.

I think, as I said, that this was a very productive session of the Conference. I think it is fair to say, an extraordinarily productive one. Just think of the range of significant questions we have covered and decided upon in the committees and the plenary, and I will not refer to them because the Vice-Presidents have all touched upon them. There are a very wide range of issues.

The political importance of President M beki, President of the African Union, K ing A bdullah of J ordan in the middle of the M iddle East situation, President L ula who was not at the Conference but was with us the day before, I think that this all shows the space that we have created in terms of such important international personalities wanting to be with us and wanting to speak to the world from the ILO. I also want to thank everyone for their support for the Working out of poverty R eport that I presented.

What I think is that this shows is that tripartism is alive and well. Delegates expressed their opinions vigorously, as in the Committee on the A pplication of Standards and, even in the course of this morning, on key issues of values, principles and procedures.

Delegates also listened to each other. I think that, listening to the questions of the Committee on the A pplication of Standards today, somebody remarked that these were emotional debates. I think that these are not emotional, but real debates. These are issues that hurt. They hurt the governments who are here and have to give explanations. They hurt the workers who have to raise these points because they feel that things are happening.

I think that the most important conclusion that I draw is that these are real questions and that, fortunately, we have a legitimate international system to be able to deal with them.

The important thing is that it has to be efficient and effective and it has to be organized in such a way that everybody feels that the work is efficient for everybody, and that we can all trust the way the system works. But I would say that, thanks to the ILO, we have a place where these things can be discussed and they can be discussed by listening to each other and finding appropriate solutions. I think that this is how we forge consensus and move ahead. It sounds simple, but as we know all too well, respect for the other is fragile in many parts of the world. Here it is deeply imbedded and that is a quality, I think, that we should guard vigilantly.

Over the last four years, I have done my best to listen and take up the issues you want to bring to the ILO. I have thanked you for re-electing me but I also want to thank you for reconfirming the efforts we are all making together to shape the ILO of the twenty-first century. Like the whole multilateral system, we have to show on a daily basis that we are relevant and effective. Your Conference in many ways has met that test. But we could do more and we must do more.

The knowledge delegates bring to the critical issues before us and the massive global network tripartism represents constitute a considerable force for social and economic progress. The challenges are huge and we must constantly renew our efforts at home and
here to realise fully the potential of tripartism — create jobs and enterprises, respect workers' rights and conventions, expand social protection: these are among the most important challenges that we have all agreed together that we want to pursue.

Let me tell you that, and this is a conviction that obviously has been growing as I have to perform my functions as Director-General, I have the deepest conviction that, in the world today, tripartism is a force for stability and for security, and that together we have the unique potential of bringing solutions to a deeply unbalanced world. Because the balance is constructed in the composition of our institutions. I believe that, together, we can be the voice of reason based on the funding of values of social justice.

As we all think together about what it is that you would like me to do in the next mandate that you have so generously given me, I think that probably the biggest question we have in front of us is how do we transform this extraordinary potential of 138 employer organizations of the world sitting in the ILO, and more than 200 million organized workers through different forms sitting in the ILO. The social, the human, and the dimension of people represented by governments. Can you imagine a more extraordinary global network of people that are living in the real world, that know what happens in the real economy and enterprises and know what happens in the real life of the workplace? I think that the potential is absolutely extraordinary and that we have in front of us the decision to use it on so many things, to bring balance to an unbalanced world and to bring reason to so many places in which they are not present. I will simply leave with you the idea that I think the potential that we have towards the future can probably make an enormous difference to many of the issues that are being discussed in the world today. We just have to think about what is the best way of bringing that force to bear in order to make our own effort and our own contribution towards making the world a better place.

The President (Vice-President, Minister of National Reconstruction, Kenya) — Let me start by declaring one simple truth. I came to the 91st Session of the International Labour Conference to accept the great honour that had been bestowed upon my country, Kenya, by the African Group at the ILO and to be the entire world community, as a result of a new world phenomenon, called the “clean election campaign”.

I would now like to take this opportunity to thank the African Group at the ILO and by the entire world community, as a result of a new world phenomenon, called the “clean election campaign”.

I would now like to take this opportunity to thank the African Group and the entire ILO for honouring me with the presidency of the 91st Session of this great Conference.

The concept of a clean election campaign, in a nutshell, demands that those who wish to root out corrupt political regimes and establish good governance in their countries, must themselves mount a clean election campaign and, if successful, embrace the tenets of good governance in word and deed.

Our party, the National Rainbow Coalition, in short NARC, led by President Mwai Kibaki, accepted this challenge. In the course of the campaign, however, there were times when we were most frustrated, as would-be voters came forward demanding in Swahili to be given “kitu kidogo”, meaning “a little something” — a small bribe, something that the electorate had been used to through many years of corruption in my country. Our international friends, who had led us into this clean election campaign business, were neither willing, nor even able to give us any money whatsoever. We were left to depend on our own wits and upon the prevailing wind of change that blew strongly across our nation. Halfway through the campaign, Kenyan voters began to realize that this election was not about money; it was about change. They too, began to change. We went on to win a resounding victory at the polls. We had overcome the challenge that the great Russian writer, Tolstoy, described many years ago, namely that “everybody thinks of changing humanity, but nobody thinks of changing himself”. Kenyans had changed. And we had lived the legal maxim that he who goes to equity must go with clean hands.

The second simple truth I would like to declare is that I am neither a great labour law scholar, nor a trade unionist. Before I was elected to my late father’s seat in the Kenyan Parliament, in 1979, I had been, among other things, a lecturer in international law at the University of Nairobi. My areas of specialization were the law of treaties and the conflict of laws. I therefore took the gavel of the presidency of the 91st Session of the ILO with some trepidation. Each time I was referred to as “Mr. President” I had to turn and look behind me, as the word “President” has been traditionally reserved only for the Head of State in my country, where I am only the Vice-President.

So, whatever successes this 91st Session of the ILO may have achieved must surely be due to the diligence of the Director-General, Mr. Juan Somavia, the Conference’s extremely hardworking Clerk, Mr. Damen, the ILC’s devoted team of officers, the Committee Chairs and Reporters and the collective good will of all the distinguished delegates.

To you all, I say thank you. Last but not least in this category, let me single out for special thanks my illustrious Vice-Presidents: Mr. Muhaisin, Government Vice-President and Minister for Labour from Jordan, Mr. Noakes, Employer Vice-President from Australia and Mr. Wojcik, Worker Vice-President from Poland.

I would also like to spare a word for my personal assistant, Mr. Tayo Fashoyin, who literally became my alter ego and guided me through all the assignments, sometimes wanting to succeed more than I did myself.

Finally, Vicky Hincha-Majuwa, my secretary, who is simply everything that a President of an International Labour Conference would want for a secretary. God bless her.

The committees of the Conference worked extremely hard and sometimes late into the night to discharge their mandate. I had the honour to visit two of them, namely the Committee on the Employment Relationship and the Committee on Seafarers. I also made time to attend a reception hosted by the conference interpreters, a wonderful reception by an essential, but sometimes overlooked part of any international conference.

Work undertaken by any committee of the ILC is ipso facto important work. As I do not have the luxury of time or space, let me single out the work of the Committee on Seafarers’ to improve security of seafarers’ identification. Seafarers are a very special breed of people. Since time immemorial, they have left their homes, defied the seas, dared to overcome the waves in search of new worlds, new commerce and exotic adventure. It was seafarers who exploded the theory of a flat world and instead proved that the
A king Abdullah II said the current road map in the Middle East, as imperfect as it may be, still offers the best chance for a settlement in that region. In the words of Alexander Cadogan, leader of the British delegation to the Dumbarton Oaks Talks in 1944, “My experience of the League of Nations has led me to believe that the most perfect instrument we could possibly create for a new world order, would not succeed without the right spirit of trust.” On the contrary, even an imperfect instrument would work satisfactorily if we had that all-important spirit of trust.

The road map per se will not make peace in the Middle East. Peace will have to be made by brave people like King Abdullah II, who have faith and trust in humanity.

To conclude, the theme of the Global Report and the Director-General’s Report, Working out of poverty — I could not do better than to quote Isabella Allende when she postulates in her world famous novel, The House of Spirits, that since Adam and Eve were chased out of the Garden of Eden, the work ethic has been fundamental in man’s psyche. She points out that on leaving school young people automatically beg for work. They will only beg for alms after all their efforts to get work have failed, because they need to keep their bodies and souls together. And when those who give arms get fed up and boot them away, in desperation they turn to crime.

The ILO, and all of us, owe all humanity a great debt. Let us not turn our young men and women into alms seekers and ultimately criminals. My personal wish is that the conclusions reached at this 91st Session of the Conference are promptly translated into national policies and actions.

With the gavel that the Secretary-General has just given me, I declare the 91st Session of the International Labour Conference closed.

(The Conference adjourned sine die at 2.40 p.m.)
Vote par appel nominal sur la résolution concernant l'adoption des propositions de programme et de budget pour 2004-05 et la fixation de la contribution des Etats Membres

Record vote on the resolution for the adoption of the Programme and Budget for 2004-05 and the allocation of the budget of income among member States

Votación nominal sobre la resolución relativa a la adopción del Programa y Presupuesto para 2004-2005 y al prorrateo del presupuesto de ingresos entre los Estados Miembros

Pour/For/En Pro: 402
Abstentions/Abstentions/Abstenciones: 16
Quorum: 280

Pour/For/En Pro: 402
Abstentions/Abstentions/Abstenciones: 16
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Islande/Iceland/Islandia
DAVIDSDÓTTIR, Ms. (G)
KRISTINSSON, Mr. (G)
MAGNÚSSON, Mr. (E)
NORDDAHL, Mr. (T/W)

Israël/Israel
WAXMAN, Mr. (G)

Italie/Italy/Italia
QUINTAVALLE, Mme (G)
PERONE, M. (G)
SASSO MAZZUFFERI, Mme (E)
BRIGHI, Mme (T/W)

Jamaïque/Jamaica
YING, Mr. (G)
SMITH, Mr. (G)
GOODLEIGH, Mr. (T/W)

Japon/Japan/Japón
OSIMA, Mr. (G)
HASEGAWA, Mr. (G)
SUZUKI, Mr. (E)

Italie/Italy/Italia
QUINTAVALLE, Mme (G)
PERONE, M. (G)
SASSO MAZZUFFERI, Mme (E)
BRIGHI, Mme (T/W)

Jamaïque/Jamaica
YING, Mr. (G)
SMITH, Mr. (G)
GOODLEIGH, Mr. (T/W)

Jordanie/Jordan/Jordania
KHRES, Mr. (G)
AL-OMRANI, Mr. (T/W)

Kazakhstan/Kazajstán
TASHIBAYEV, Mr. (G)

Kenya
NGARE, Mr. (G)
ONGEWE, Mrs. (G)
OWUOR, Mr. (E)

Koweit/Kuwait
AL-SABAHI, Mr. (G)
RAZZOOGI, Mr. (G)
AL-HAROON, Mr. (E)

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AL-HAROON, Mr. (E)

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RAZZOOGI, Mr. (G)
AL-HAROON, Mr. (E)

Lao PDR/Laos
THONGPRASITH, Mr. (G)
THONGARONG, Mr. (G)

Lituanie/Lithuania/Lituania
PETRIKAS, Mr. (G)
JAKUCIONYTĖ, Ms. (G)
ALELIUNAS, Mr. (E)
DAGYS, Mr. (T/W)

Luxembourg/Luxemburgo
FABER, M. (G)
ZAHALEN, M. (G)
BERTRAND-SCHAUL, Mme (E)
PIZZAFERRI, M.(T/W)

Madagascar
PASEA, Mme (G)
SEM RAMBELOSON, M. (G)

Malaisie/Malaysia/Malasia
MUHAMAD, Mr. (G)
SHAHARUDIN, Mr. (G)
ZAINAL, Mr. (T/W)

Malawi
MONONGA, Mr. (G)
KAMBUTO, Mr. (G)
SINJANI, Mr. (E)
ANTONIO, Mr. (T/W)

Mali/Mali
DIAKITE, M. (G)
MAHAMANE, M. (G)
DIAKITE, M. (T/W)

Maroc/Morocco/Marruecos
HILAIRE, M. (G)
JALIL, M. (G)

Mauritanie/Mauritania
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OUND CHEIKHINA, M. (G)
OUNL ABDALLAH, M. (E)

Mexique/Mexico/México
ROVIROSA, Sra. (G)
MORONES, Sra. (G)
GUTIÉRREZ, Sr. (E)
ANDERSON, Sra. (T/W)

Mongolie/Mongolia
BADRAL, Mr. (G)
GANBAATAR, Mr. (E)
ADIYA, Mr. (T/W)

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JAMICE, Mr. (G)
SITOIE, Mr. (T/W)

Myanmar
THAN, Mr. (G)
NYUNT, Mr. (G)

Namibie/Namibia
HIVELUAH, Ms. (G)
SHINGUADJA, Mr. (G)
TRUEBODY, Mr. (E)
KAPENDA, Mr. (T/W)

Nicaragua
CRUZ TORUÑO, Sr. (G)
MARTINICA LÓPEZ, Sr. (G)

Niger/Níger
MAIN, M. (G)
MAMADOU, M. (G)

Nigéria/Nigeria
ATILOLA, Mr. (G)
OSHIOMHOLE, Mr. (T/W)

Norvège/Norway/Noruega
BRUAAS, Mr. (G)
VIDNES, Mr. (G)
HOFF, Mr. (E)

Nouvelle-Zélande/New Zealand/Nueva Zelandia
KNOWLES, Ms. (E)
FENTON, Ms. (T/W)

Oman/Omán
AL-ABDUWANI, Mr. (G)
AL-AMRY, Mr. (G)
AL-RABIAIE, Mr. (E)
ASADALLAH, Mr. (T/W)

Ouganda/Uganda
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THENGE, Mr. (E)
ONGABA, Mr. (T/W)

Pakistan/Pakistán
SARWAR, Mr. (G)
UMER, Mr. (G)
TABANI, Mr. (E)

Panama/Panamá
BELIZ, Sr. (G)
LINERO MENDOZA, Sr. (E)

Papouasie-Nouvelle-Guinée/Papua New Guinea/Papua Nueva Guinea
TIBU, Mr. (G)
ARUA, Mr. (G)
NANA, Mr. (E)
MAHUK, Mr. (T/W)

Pays-Bas/Netherlands/Países Bajos
NOTEBOOM, Ms. (G)
BEETS, Mr. (G)
HUNTIENS, Mr. (E)

Perou/Peru/Perú
VEGAS TORRES, Sr. (G)
BERAUN, Sra. (G)
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Canada/Canadá
ROBINSON, Ms. (G)
MACPHEE, Mr. (G)

Lettonie/Latvia/Letonia
KARKLINS, Mr. (G)
KALNINS, Mr. (G)

Nouvelle-Zélande/New Zealand/Nueva Zelandia
CHETWIN, Mr. (G)
STEFFENS, Ms. (G)

Royaume-Uni/United Kingdom/Reino Unido
NELLTHORP, Ms. (G)
RICHARDS, Mr. (G)

Uruguay
PUIG, Sr. (T/W)

Venezuela
DORADO CANO-MANUEL, Sr. (G)
MOLINA, Sr. (G)
CHIRINO, Sr. (T/W)
Vote final par appel nominal sur la convention sur les pièces d'identité des gens de mer (révisée), 2003

Final record vote on the Seafarers’ Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003

Votación nominal final relativa al convenio sobre los documentos de identidad de la gente de mar (revisado), 2003

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Chine/China
LIU, Mr. (G)
LI, Mr. (G)
CHEN, Mr. (E)
XU, Mr. (T/W)

Chypre/Cyprus/Cipre
MINA, Mrs. (G)
LANITOU WILLIAMS, Mrs. (G)
KAPARTIS, Mr. (E)
KYRITSIS, Mr. (T/W)

Congo
MENGA, M. (G)

République de Corée/Republic of Korea/República de Corea
YI, Mr. (G)
LEE, Mr. (G)
SUH, Mr. (E)
KIM, Mr. (T/W)

Costa Rica
CORELLA CALVO, Sr. (G)
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AGUILAR ARCE, Sr. (T/W)

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BOLLOU BI DIEHIFFE, M. (G)
LATTE EKOUDOU, M. (G)
ETTÉ, M. (T/W)

Croatie/Croatia/Croacia
SOCANAC, Mr. (G)
BERLAN, Mr. (T/W)

Cuba
HERNANDEZ OLIVA, Sra. (G)
LAU VALDES, Sr. (G)
VIDAUD MÁRQUEZ, Sr. (E)
GONZÁLEZ, Sr. (T/W)

Danemark/Denmark/Dinamarca
GEDE, Ms. (G)
PEDERSEN, Mr. (G)
DREESSEN, Mr. (E)
SVENNINGSEN, Mr. (T/W)

République dominicaine/Dominican Republic/República Dominicana
NÚÑEZ, Sr. (G)
REYES UREÑA, Sr. (G)

Égypte/Egypt/Egipto
GABR, Mrs. (G)
GHAFAR, Mr. (G)
IBRAHIM ABD, Mr. (E)
RASHED, Mr. (T/W)

El Salvador
NIETO MENENDEZ, Sr. (G)
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MOLINA, Sra. (T/W)

Émirats arabes unis/United Arab Emirates/Emiratos Arabes Unidos
BAMATRAF, Mr. (G)
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AL-GAZI, Mr. (E)
AL-MARZOQI, Mr. (T/W)

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TAPIA GARÓFALO, Sr. (G)
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CEVALLOS, Sr. (E)
TATAMUEZ, Sr. (T/W)

Erythrée/Eritrea
BEREKET, Mr. (G)

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PÉREZ-VILLANUEVA Y TOVAR, Sr. (G)
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HINDOV, Mrs. (G)
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TUCH, Mrs. (T/W)

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WHITE, Mr. (G)
POTTER, Mr. (E)
ZELLOHEFER, Mr. (T/W)

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ALEMAYEHU, Mr. (T/W)

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WAQA, Mr. (G)

Finlande/Finland/Finlandia
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RAIVIO, Ms. (G)
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JOUBIER, M. (T/W)

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MAYOMBO, M. (T/W)

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AMEGEE, Mr. (G)
AMPIAH, Mr. (E)
AYIKWEI KOFIE, Mrs. (T/W)

Grèce/Greece/Grecia
LAIÓU-SANPOPOLLOU, Mlle (G)
CAMBITYS, M. (G)
CHARAKAS, M. (E)
DELIYIANNAKIS, M. (T/W)

Guatemala
ALVARADO ORTIGOZA, Sr. (G)
MALDONADO CASTELLANOS, Sr. (G)
RICCI MUADI, Sr. (E)
AGUILAR GARCÍA, Sr. (T/W)

Guinée/Guinea
DIALLO, M. (G)
CONDE, M. (E)

Guinée-Bissau/Guinea-Bissau
ALBERTO, M. (G)

Haiti/Haiti/Haití
CHARLES, M. (G)

Honduras
BÚ FIGUEROA, Sra. (G)
FÚNEZ ESTRADA, Sr. (T/W)

Hongrie/Hungary/Hungría
BÉKÉS, Mr. (G)
HERCZOGL, Mr. (G)
SZIRMAI, Mr. (E)
GERGELY, Mr. (T/W)

Inde/India
SAHA, Mr. (G)
SHENOY, Mr. (G)
ANAND, Mr. (E)
THAKKAR, Mr. (T/W)

Indonésie/Indonesia
WISNUMURTI, Mr. (G)
SITUMORANG, Mr. (G)
PITOYO, Mr. (E)

République islamique d'Iran/Islamic Republic of Iran/República Islámica del Irán
SA'ADATI, Mr. (G)
HAGH-BAYAN, Mr. (E)
SALIMIAN, Mr. (T/W)

Irlande/Ireland/Irlanda
BENNETT, Mr. (G)
JESTIN, Mr. (G)
LYNCH, Ms. (T/W)

Islande/Iceland/Islandia
DAVÍDSDÓTTIR, Ms. (G)
KRISTINSSON, Mr. (G)
MAGNÚSSON, Mr. (E)
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WAXMAN, Mr. (G)
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<td>YING, Mr. (G)</td>
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<td>OSHIMA, Mr. (G)</td>
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<td>AL-SABAH, Mr. (G)</td>
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<td>MATSOSO, Ms. (G)</td>
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<td>SHINGUADJA, Mr. (G)</td>
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<td>CRUZ TORUÑO, Sr. (G)</td>
<td>MARTINICA LÓPEZ, Sr. (G)</td>
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<td>RIBEIRO LOPES, M. (G)</td>
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<td>HAIDAR, Mr. (G)</td>
<td>AL MAL, Ms. (G)</td>
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CONSTANTINESCU, Mme (G)
NICOLESCU, M. (E)
HOSSU, M.(T/W)

Royaume-Uni/United Kingdom/Reino Unido
NELLTHORP, Ms. (G)
RICHARDS, Mr. (G)
LAMBERT, Mr. (E)
STEYNE, Mr.(T/W)

Fédération de Russie/Russian Federation/Federación de Rusia
LUBLIN, Mr. (G)
KONDAKOV, Mr. (G)
EREMEEV, Mr. (E)
SHMAKOV, Mr.(T/W)

Saint-Marin/San Marino
BIGI, Mme (G)
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Senegal/Senegal
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Seychelles
ERNESTA, Mr. (G)
BAKER, Mr. (G)
SULTAN-BEAUDOUIN, Mr. (E)
CHARLES, Mr.(T/W)

Slovaquie/Slovakia/Eslovaquia
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Slovénie/Slovenia/Eslovenia
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BOEHM, Ms.(T/W)

Soudan/Sudan/Sudán
BAKRI, Mr. (G)
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EL GURASHI, Mr. (E)
GHANDOUR, Mr.(T/W)

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SENARATNE, Mr. (G)
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Suède/Sweden/Suecia
JONZON, Mr. (G)
WIKLUND, Ms. (G)
LAURENT, Ms. (E)
EDSTRÖM, Mr.(T/W)

Suisse/Switzerland/Suiza
VEUVE, M. (G)
BARDE, M. (E)
PRINCE, M.(T/W)

Suriname
ANTONIUS, Mr. (G)
BELFOR, Mr. (G)
REFOS, Mr. (E)
WATERBERG, Mr.(T/W)

République arabe syrienne/Syrian Arab Republic/República Arabe Siria
AKASH, M. (G)
IBRAHIM, M. (G)
LAHMIAM, M. (E)
AZZOUZ, M.(T/W)

République-Unie de Tanzanie/United Republic of Tanzania/República Unida de Tanzania
RAJABU, Mr. (G)
RWEYEMAMU, Ms. (G)
MAENDA, Mr. (E)

Tchad/Chad
KADE, Mme (G)

République tchèque/Czech Republic/República Checa
TOMKOVÁ, Mrs. (G)
SLABÝ, Mr. (G)
DRBALOVÁ, Mrs. (E)
BERAN, Mr.(T/W)

Thaïlande/Thailand/Tailandia
CHAVALITNITIKUL, Mr. (G)
PAYAKANITI, Mrs. (G)
KOSIN, Mr. (E)
TECHATEERAVAT, Mr.(T/W)

Trinité-et-Tobago/Trinidad and Tobago/Trinidad y Tabago
BRATHWAITE, Mr. (G)
HILTON-CLARKE, Mr. (E)

Tunisie/Tunisia/Túnez
CHATTI, M. (G)
CHOUBA, Mme (G)
MKAISSI, M. (E)
TRABELSI, M.(T/W)

Turquie/Turkey/Turquía
SAHIN, Mr. (G)
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CENTEL, Mr. (E)

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Uruguay
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Venezuela
DE ARBELOA, Sr. (E)
CHIRINO, Sr.(T/W)

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LE, Mr. (G)
NGUYEN, Mr. (G)
NGUYEN, Mr. (E)
VO, Mr.(T/W)

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MUFUKARE, Mr. (E)
MATOMBO, Mr.(T/W)

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Australie/Australia
BRODRICK, Mr. (G)
ROWLING, Mr. (G)

Colombie/Colombia
ARANGO DE BUITRAGO, Sra. (G)

Liban/Lebanon/Líbano
KHAZÂL, Mme (G)
SAAB, Mme (G)
BALKHOUL, M. (E)

Mexique/Mexico/México
ROVIROSA, Sra. (G)
MORONES, Sra. (G)

Oman/Omán
AL-ABDUWANI, Mr. (G)
AL-AMRY, Mr. (G)
AL-RABAIE, Mr. (E)

Pakistan/Pakistán
SARWAR, Mr. (G)
UMER, Mr. (G)

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PUIG, Sr.(T/W)

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