

Report

ILO Forum on Decent Work for a Fair Globalization

Lisbon, Portugal
31 October – 2 November 2007

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1.

Introduction

The Forum on Decent Work for a Fair Globalization was organized by the ILO in Lisbon from 31 October to 2 November 2007. It was hosted by the Government of Portugal during its Presidency of the European Union and it also received support from the European Commission. The Forum gathered about 400 participants from the tripartite constituency of the ILO, international and regional organisations, organizations of civil society, research and education institutes, the media and parliaments from all over the world. It provided a venue for an open exchange of views on approaches and experiences in promoting decent work as a contribution to shaping a fair globalization.

The Forum was the first of its kind. Its programme was prepared in close consultation with the Officers of the ILO Governing Body and the Government of Portugal. Particular attention was paid to six policy areas that are central to the Decent Work Agenda, namely:

- strengthening education, training and employability,
- upgrading the informal economy,
- managing labour migration,
- expanding social security,
- decent jobs for young women and men
- addressing the issue of policy coherence in the international system.¹

In addition, political leaders and leaders from key stakeholder groups provided participants with their perspectives on broad issues linked to the pursuit of decent work for a fair globalization.²

The Forum facilitated a substantive and wide-ranging discussion. It registered the progress made towards a fairer globalization since the World Commission on

¹ see www.ilo.org/lisbonforum for a full set of information including the list of participants and the background issue papers for each of the six thematic areas.

² For the programme of the meeting see Annex 1 in the Appendix.

the Social Dimension of Globalization published its report in 2004.³ At the same time it resonated with the concern that progress remained uneven, inequalities and decent work deficits still affected too many people in too many countries, and confidence in the institutions tasked to govern globalization was weak. Against that scenario, the Forum brought up evidence of a fresh commitment to stronger social policies in both developing and developed countries, pointing out cases of success of policies and programmes for decent work, new promising approaches, and areas where policy development was further required. The need for greater coherence of relevant national and international policies was a recurring motif.

Many ideas and suggestions came out of the discussion, which should inspire policy-makers and stakeholders and prompt them into more decisive action. Those ideas and suggestions were presented to the Working Party on the Social Dimension of Globalization of the ILO Governing Body in its March 2008 session and will be used as an input to the preparation of the ILO's Strategic Policy Framework for 2010-2015.

The content and outcomes of the discussion showed it was possible to have meaningful dialogue on politically contentious issues by means of ensuring an open and constructive exchange, adequate technical depth and focus on solutions. This was the spirit that had led the ILO to establish the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization. The presence in Lisbon of several members of that Commission as well a significant number of representatives of the ILO Governing Body bore witness to that spirit, adding a distinctive dimension to the Forum.

"The report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization helped the global community overcome the extremist debates on globalization and engage into a more realistic and balanced discussion. It put forward several recommendations for a fair globalization, notably to bring international organizations together to see how to contribute to more coordinated and concerted forms of global governance. This Forum is a continuation of that effort."

François Périgot, Honorary President of the International Organisation of Employers and member of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization

Originally, the idea of convening a forum to discuss policies for a fair globalization was put forward in the report of the World Commission. The Commission provided strong support to the ILO's mission of decent work for all, arguing that it should be made a global goal in order to adequately realize the potential of globalization to bring benefits to all. With its tradition of promoting dialogue the ILO was well placed to provide a globalization policy forum for the ILO's tripartite constituents, international organizations and other relevant actors to discuss how decent work should be best promoted.

Two parallel events were held in the course of the Lisbon Forum that showed concretely how the interest in an open discussion on the issues related to decent work for a fair globalization went beyond the usual ILO networks.

³ "A fair globalization: Creating opportunities for all", report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, ILO, Geneva, 2004; see also "The quest for a fair globalization three years on: Assessing the impact of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization" by Hamish Jenkins, Eddy Lee and Gerry Rodgers, ILS Discussion paper 175/2007 (www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/inst/download/dp17507.pdf).

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) organized the participation of a number of parliamentarians to the Forum and on 31 October 2007 convened a separate meeting of parliamentarians to discuss how best the IPU could facilitate parliamentary action on decent work for a fair globalization and extend its cooperation with the ILO. Their conclusions were presented at a plenary session of the Forum in a panel of parliamentarians.⁴

An international meeting on “Putting the puzzle together: policy coherence for decent work” was also organized in Lisbon on 31 October 2007 by the International Trade Union Confederation and the European Trade Union Confederation in collaboration with the Global Progressive Forum, Solidar and Social Alert International. The participants took the occasion of the ILO Forum to launch a “Call to Action for Decent Work” in the form of a petition to build on the global campaign “Decent Work – Decent Life” that got underway at the World Social Forum in Nairobi in 2006. The Call to Action will be publicised throughout the world and the signatures collected will be presented to decision-makers at key international events.⁵

The Lisbon Spirit

The Forum was a point of departure for the ILO. There are four reasons why it was an important event.

“Those of us from the ILO who were at the Forum very quickly began to speak amongst ourselves in terms of the “Lisbon spirit” ... the atmosphere in Lisbon had almost everything that personally I, as the current chairperson to the Governing Body, feel the ILO needs as we move into the new millennium.”

Mr. Dayan Jayatilaka, Chairperson of the ILO Governing Body

Firstly, it gave evidence of the genuine interest of a large variety of individuals and groups in the Decent Work Agenda and how it links with some of the critical issues of today: equity, fairness and social justice in the global economy. Parliamentarians, members of civil society, NGOs, political leaders and opinion shapers found in Lisbon a common framework to promote respect for rights at work, social protection, voice and decent economic opportunities for

all. They also found a core partner to pursue those goals – the tripartite ILO.

Secondly, those who participated in the Forum did not just bring their expression of interest. They came with their experience in making change happen. They talked about new vast social assistance programmes, local community development initiatives, innovative frameworks to provide decent work opportunities for migrant workers, schemes for youth entrepreneurship and skills development – each story a solid piece of decent work in the making. As inequalities are growing and take a more visible toll on our societies, there emerged the sense in Lisbon of a strong new wave of social policies on its way. The Decent Work agenda sits at such a turning point.

⁴ See Annex 2 in the Appendix.

⁵ See Annex 3 in the Appendix.

“We see more and more the value of the Decent Work Agenda in dealing with domestic political elections, how we can hold politicians accountable and get them to think of what kinds of programmes they can implement in their own countries.”

John Sweeney, President of the American Federation of Labour and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) and member of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization

Thirdly, participants could learn practical lessons for policy development – the need for coherence, the value of partnership and collaboration, the importance of data and measurements for sensible policy-making, monitoring and evaluation. Such learning rests as a fundamental practice the ILO should encourage as it engages in the critical task of promoting decent work as a global goal. It is indeed a primary function of the ILO to provide a public

space for the sharing of good practice and knowledge on social and labour issues and to foster policy dialogue and policy innovation.

Fourthly, it was particularly encouraging to see international and regional organizations so positively involved in the debate on decent work. In a world of increasing economic interdependence, international institutions can no longer operate as independent “silos”. They need to talk to each other more and work together in more coherent ways. The ILO could be proud it helped start that process and focus it on decent work.

Not all issues were resolved. But as decent work is taking root in the agenda of policy-makers and politicians in all regions, the outcomes of the discussion in Lisbon provided much mileage. The Lisbon spirit – open, constructive and committed – is a main resource for the international community in coping with a critical challenge: to seek solutions and strategies to unleash the productive capacity of people across nations.

This report contains the summary proceedings of the Forum. Its aim is to provide a glimpse of the discussions and underline the main messages. The report succinctly reviews the main outcomes of the forum (section 2); provides a summary account of the keynote presentations at the plenary sessions (section 3); contains highlights of the discussions at the six thematic panels, focusing on policy responses (section 4); and contains a short summary of the concluding remarks by the organizers (section 5). The programme of the Forum is included in Annex 1 in the Appendix. Annex 2 includes the conclusions of the IPU meeting and Annex 3 contains the full text of the “Call to Action for Decent Work”.



A Decent Work movement

2.

Main Outcomes

Strong convergence around Decent Work for a Fair Globalization

The discussions revealed a strong convergence of views around decent work for a fair globalization, including from organisations that had not previously worked closely with the ILO. The current process of globalization was viewed by many as unsustainable – economically, socially, environmentally and politically. To avoid a possible backlash, it was essential to reshape policies at national and international levels to deliver on people’s demands for decent work.

This implied greater policy coherence centred on employment and decent work, which had to begin with fairer and more coherent policies at national level, both on domestic agendas and in positions taken in international organisations. Appropriate policies varied depending on national context, and each country needed adequate room for manoeuvre to calibrate policies to local conditions, capacities and needs. However, there were common principles and international standards from which all countries could work and many common issues to be addressed. Among others, fostering a combination of greater social justice and inclusion; entrepreneurship and innovation; focus on local capabilities and skills; greater social protection for all workers and their families; and fair, rule-based multilateral frameworks for trade, investment and migration were seen as essential ways forward.

Focus on policy development and delivering results

If consensus around the goal of decent work was a significant achievement, there was also a widespread feeling that the challenge was now implementation. For some participants the Forum marked a new phase in the Decent Work Agenda, one where a stronger focus was on delivering results and having an impact on people’s lives. Indeed the Forum provided insights and suggestions for robust and effective decent work policies and programmes, based on the review of experience from a variety of settings. The discussion reflected

“The next step is to create a set of tools to enable countries to master the implementation of the decent work agenda in a way that is tailored to the real needs of workers and employers in each country.”

Honorée Epee Kotto, National Social Security Fund, Cameroon

the fresh commitment to stronger social policies that is now emerging in many developing and industrialized countries. It highlighted the continuing importance of tripartism and the potential of synergies between public and private sectors for policy formulation and delivery. It confronted the day-to-day challenges of implementation, including issues of capability, political com-

mitment and coordination among different agencies and ministries. Lessons in this domain are of particular value to ILO and other stakeholders engaged in the Decent Work Agenda.

Progress towards international policy coherence

There were several references to the value of collaboration among agencies of the multilateral system, and examples where greater impact could be made by joining forces in the promotion of decent work. This is prompting new initiatives and changes in the perspectives of the many international agencies that attended the Forum. Representatives of FAO, IMF, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNESCO, UN-HABITAT, UNRISD, World Bank and WTO all engaged actively in the Forum discussions.

The issue of international policy coherence was one of the main items under discussion. While acknowledging the differences in the mandate, approach and structure of each agency, the discussion showed there are practical means and instruments to promote dialogue, greater coordination and synergies. One such instrument in particular – the Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work adopted by the UN system’s Chief Executive Board – was recognized as a promising avenue.

New opportunities for collaboration and advocacy

The Forum provided an opportunity to promote the Decent Work Agenda among international and regional organizations, particularly ASEAN, OECD and the European Union. The Prime Minister of Portugal, Mr. José Socrates, highlighted the convergence between the internal and external dimensions of the Lisbon Strategy and the promotion of decent work for a fair globalization. The European Commission also expressed its commitment to support the Decent Work Agenda among EU and non-EU member countries.

Stronger involvement of parliamentarians was another outcome of the Forum. Representatives from the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) brought to Lisbon their commitment to set up an international “parliamentary advisory group” on employment and decent work, to formulate a programme of work with the ILO and to prepare tools to help parliamentarians promote policy

"We need to get the politicians involved in the Decent Work Agenda – the members of parliament, those that have a mandate to represent people, those that legislate, particularly those who adopt the budget and can influence where the priorities go in governmental programmes."

Anders Johnsson, Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

coherence for decent work for a fair globalization at national and international levels.

Another important new actor – the Decent Work Decent Life Campaign (DWDL), a broad coalition between the international trade union movement and civil society organisations – took the opportunity of the Forum to launch their Call to Action for Decent Work, a large-scale initiative to mobilize and enhance awareness of people from all over the world (www.decentwork.org).

"If you had asked me four years ago if it would be possible to have so many people here from government, trade unions, business and civil society, all united under the banner of Decent Work, I wouldn't have believed it. This is a terrific achievement. It's the beginning of a campaign [...] to make Decent Work the key driver of the kind of globalization we want."

Giampero Alhadeff, former Secretary-General of Solidar and Secretary-General of British Labour Party at the European Parliament

New opportunities for collaboration and advocacy

Finally, the Forum confirmed the value of the ILO's method of work based on dialogue. It made visible the Organization's unique capacity to provide a

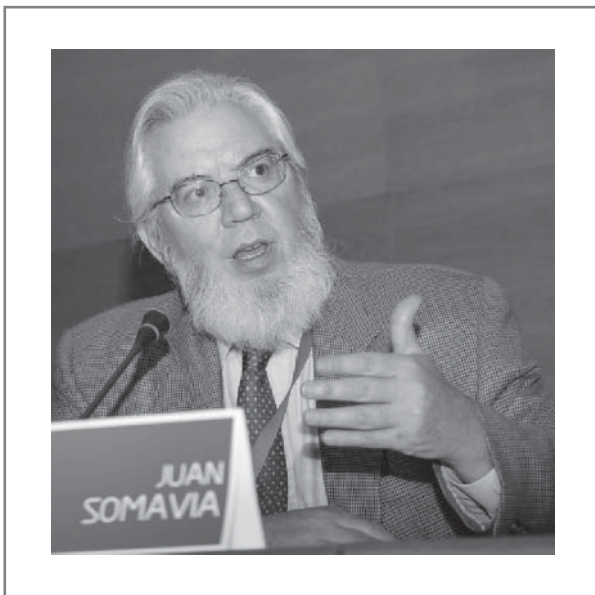
platform for a focused and purposeful discussion on contentious issues among a variety of voices and interests. Debating ideas with people who come from different perspectives and approaches helped to sharpen each others' understanding of the issues, facilitating policy and innovation and broad-based agreement on common action.

"There are few places and opportunities in the world to have such a frank debate and with such a plurality and quality of participants."

Carlos Tomada, Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Security of Argentina

3. *Summary of Proceedings*

Opening plenary session



Mr. Juan Somavia, Director-General of the ILO, opened the Forum by stressing that the leading political and economic priority today is to implement policies that expand opportunities, reduce inequalities and answer people's demand for a fair globalization. This required strong processes of dialogue and action that bring different parties together to shape inclusive responses to the Decent Work challenge. This was the essence of this Forum, a "meeting of people from many networks" representing a global community of State and Non-State actors which are beginning to converge around what he called an emerging global "Decent Work movement". He said the true test of development was not only about reduc-

ing poverty but also reversing the global tendency toward greater inequality. He emphasised the need to agree internationally that people in every society have a right to a "social floor" defined according to national circumstances, means and priorities, and which would combine social investments with market opportunities to expand social mobility based on increasingly better jobs. It took strong political will to ensure that the benefits of globalization were more fairly shared, he said, and strong advocacy and mobilization of people to come to action.



Mr. José Sócrates, Prime Minister of Portugal, said his government defined decent work as “probably the most powerful and most effective tool that the international community has ever produced for promoting policies that could translate into concrete responses for tackling the effects of globalization.” He noted that the European Union had progressively embraced and adopted the concepts of decent work and fair globalization. He expressed his commitment under the Portuguese Presidency of the European Union to intensify cooperation with the ILO in

these fields, which he described as a “truly historic responsibility of Europe.” He intended to prioritise improving the potential of the Lisbon Strategy, both in terms of its internal social dimension and external cooperation dimension. He insisted on the urgency in today’s world of “putting in place mechanisms for regulating globalization, and concrete commitments on basic citizenship entitlements to which every human being must have access.”

“There cannot be ethical globalization without the globalization of the ethic of decent work. And without the globalization of that ethic, globalization itself will not be sustainable.”

Mr. Dayan Jayatilaka, Chairperson of the ILO Governing Body

Dr. Dayan Jayatilaka, Chairperson of the ILO Governing Body, described the title of the Forum as an “axial” concept. On the one hand the Decent Work Agenda addressed the two most pressing problems humanity faces: poverty and alienation. On the other hand a “fair globalization” was a response to the fundamentalists at the extremes of the globalization debate.

A fairer globalization would preserve the factors of integration and unification of the information revolution but, through the provision of decent work, it would reduce widening inequities within and between communities, nations and social classes. He added that unless there was a fairer globalization and decent work for the many, it would not be possible to deal with other pressing problems, notably climate change, violence and terrorism.

Mr. Daniel Funes de Rioja, Employer Vice-Chairperson of the ILO Governing Body, said that economic and political freedoms consolidate each other. He took stock of many of the benefits that globalization had brought – in terms of poverty reduction, the spread of democracy and freer exchange of goods, ideas and knowledge – but warned that still far too many people and countries were excluded. He emphasised the importance of reaching a broad consensus on the “right policy framework” that would make sure that globalization was as inclusive as possible. He cited in particular the consensus reached at the 2007 session of the International Labour Conference on the “Promotion

of Sustainable Enterprises” as a way forward. Among others, he stressed the importance of a culture of entrepreneurship as the essential building block of successful economies, regulatory frameworks for innovation and competition, and skill development opportunities “to limit low-pay traps and rising earnings inequality”. He said social safety nets were an essential accompaniment to globalization albeit without becoming a barrier to employment or business competitiveness. He suggested the emphasis should shift from “job security” to “employment security” where individuals rather than uncompetitive jobs were protected. Dialogue was absolutely essential to promote better mutual understanding of the benefits and pitfalls of globalization. If current public concerns with globalization were not addressed, he warned, the gains of the last three decades could be rolled back. “In the absence of such frank debate, uncertainty can fuel calls for reactionary policies [...] This is in nobody’s interest.” He insisted on the leadership role that business needs to show in articulating its role and responsibilities in society, and what is or is not acceptable business practice.

Sir Roy Trotman, Worker Vice-Chairperson of the ILO Governing Body, said the “Call to Action” launched that morning by the Decent Work Decent Life Campaign should be answered positively by the ILO and by all international institutions that should work coherently to ensure its realization. He said Decent Work had to be placed at the centre of global governance, a universal goal throughout the UN system, including the international trade and financial institutions. He said in particular that agreements at the World Trade Organisation should not take place to the detriment of the engagements made by governments in other international institutions. He drew attention to the pertinence in today’s world of the founding principles of the 1919 ILO Constitution and the 1944 Declaration of Philadelphia and the continued relevance of tripartite conclusions and standards. He mentioned efforts underway at the annual International Labour Conference to strengthen the ILO in order to make Decent Work “become practically effective in a globalized world.” He emphasised that an integrated approach to the Decent Work Agenda’s four strategic objectives enabled the ILO to establish “a powerful, coherent package of development tools” at national and global levels to respond to the challenges of our times. He said the Workers’ Group was pleased that the tripartite constituency was joined by parliamentarians and democratic civil society organisations to focus on how to set a framework for partnerships with other organisations in meeting these challenges.

Mr. José António Vieira Da Silva, Minister for Labour and Social Solidarity of Portugal, described why his government thought decent work was such a powerful concept to shape a fairer globalization. He suggested that the reasons that the decent work debate had become a global debate in such a short number of years was because of its strong “ethical density” and the fact that it encompasses many facets which could be applied flexibly and effectively from local community or company levels to the global level. It was not just a response to the fractures and wounds of globalization, but also a tool capable of changing decisive aspects of the way globalization is evolving. He further described it as a galvanizing concept for society at large to mobilize political will, because

“We know that environmental sustainability galvanizes huge social movements nowadays. We know that the defence of human rights and fundamental freedoms is an extremely powerful tool for examining decisions. In the same way, I am sure that [the concept of decent work] will also galvanize an examination of the links that we construct and which bring us together from all parts of the planet.”

Mr. José António Vieira Da Silva, Minister for Labour and Social Solidarity of Portugal

it was an effective instrument for scrutinizing decisions that influence life in the community. Decent Work could be “transformed into a gauge of our collective decisions and the sustainability of those decisions,” he concluded.

Keynote plenary speeches

Mr Surin Pitsuwan, Secretary-General designate of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and member of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, provided a comprehensive overview of the Asian experience with globalization and the challenges the continent is facing with respect to the Decent Work Agenda. In spite of the high rates of global growth in recent years, the gap between rich and poor within and between countries has continued widening. “If we are not careful, this gap will be the structural defect that could threaten our global community in the long run.” Asia’s economic performance had not been matched by performance in job creation, he said. “Recent unemployment rates, even among university graduates represent large increases over those prevailing five to seven years ago and typically well above the pre-financial crisis level.” He noted with concern that Asia was in danger of letting down what he called the “Millennium Generation” – the world’s young people entering the labour force at the turn of the century, of which 60 per cent were in Asia. But “Even when people have jobs today, their level of insecurity and uncertainty has mounted in the context of intensified global competition and flexible work arrangements. Yet social protection is largely absent for the huge numbers of workers in the informal economy.” He emphasised the need to combine investments in dynamic sectors with investments in sectors where the majority of workers were employed as a way of balancing employment and productivity goals. He ended with a strong plea to honour commitments to agricultural market liberalization in industrialized countries as a means to promote decent work for the millions of poor people still working in agriculture in the developing world.

Mr. Vladimír Špidla, EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities said that the European Commission (EC) attached great importance to a better distribution of the benefits and risks of globalization within and between countries and considered decent work a key factor behind economic performance, productivity and sustainable development. Mr. Špidla emphasized the need for better policy coherence in multi-

lateral governance, underlining that this could only be achieved if national policies themselves were more coherent. He described in detail the initiatives taken by the European Union and the EC to strengthen the social dimension of globalization and promote decent work for all. He noted that the European Commission had reinforced its collaboration and political dialogue with the ILO over the years. He emphasized that employment, decent work and social cohesion was an integral part of the European Consensus on Development – in relation to which non-EU countries could be eligible for external assistance, notably to support Decent Work Country Programmes. Much remained to be done, he stressed, as employment and decent work had started being taken into account in international governance and development strategies only after the 2005 UN World Summit.

Mr. Mats Karlsson, Vice-Chair of the High-Level Committee on Programmes of the UN System Chief Executives' Board for Coordination (CEB), and Country Director of the World Bank said the international community had developed a body of policy consensus within which the Decent Work Agenda was now securely anchored. What was urgently needed were the tools for the multilateral system to move to implementation. As concerned issues of inequality and poverty, the measurement and analytical tools were available. The same could not be said of employment. Even experienced ministers, he said, could flounder when faced with questions linked to employment. "Policy-makers simply do not have the depth [of knowledge needed] to talk to employment issues the way they can talk to economic growth or poverty reduction". In developing countries, there were still large gaps in data that had to be urgently addressed. The employment components of national development strategies, if at all present, were often very weak. He put forward the Toolkit on Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work as a simple practical means to address those issues. The Toolkit was the result of a collective effort of the multilateral system through the UN system's Chief Executive Board for Coordination (CEB), which had identified employment and decent work as a cross-cutting theme on which system-wide efforts could make a significant difference. The check-list of questions contained in the Toolkit helped each agency of the system to enhance awareness of decent work issues and policies and help identify areas where capacity-building was needed. The process would eventually lead to better monitoring and evaluation of each organization's policies, encourage peer learning and generate synergies and opportunities for joint work. The key measure of success, however, would be whether this toolkit approach could ultimately be developed and utilized by policy-makers at the national level.

Mr. Abraham Katz, President of the International Employers Organization, said globalization had spread growth and prosperity and helped lift many people out of poverty. However, many remained poor while rapid technological change had accentuated income disparities and perceptions of being left behind. He suggested that the main objective of labour market policy was no longer "job security" but "employment security", whereby workers had to adapt to new jobs in the face of the changes brought about by globalization.

He acknowledged that this would be difficult for individual workers. It was the challenge of the ILO to help national economies embrace these changes while mitigating their adverse effects. He said he believed that many of the policy guidelines adopted in consensus documents (including at the ILO) some 20 years ago – on the importance of flexibility as essential to adjustment to change – were still valid today, even in terms of addressing the new challenges brought about by the knowledge revolution.

He described adjustment as composed of stabilization, liberalization and privatization. This had to be combined with policies to address the problem of displaced workers, including education, training and retraining and the encouragement of mobility (employment security). These prescriptions, he said, applied to developed and developing countries alike – emphasizing that the responsibility of developed countries to undergo structural adjustment policies was germane to progress on the Doha trade negotiations. He cautioned that the rapidity of current changes is fuelling a backlash against globalization in many countries and warned in particular against a rise of unilateralism in the governance of trade that “could lead into a downward spiral of beggar thy neighbour policies and measures with economic fallouts reminiscent of the 1930s...” The current round of trade negotiations should thus not fail.

“This Forum marks the end of phase one of the Decent Work Agenda and the beginning of phase two. Phase one was about advocacy, as well as understanding and acceptance of common and different responsibilities for Decent Work. [...] Phase two is about delivering results, closing Decent Work deficits, and impacting on people’s lives.”

Guy Ryder, General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation

Mr. Guy Ryder, General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation noted the remarkable degree of consensus displayed at the Forum – not only by the ILO’s own tripartite constituents but other key actors – on the need for a fair globalization and the central role of the Decent Work Agenda. This was a major accomplishment. However, this conjuncture – and indeed even the Forum itself – had to mark a point of transition, the end of one phase and the beginning of a new

one. Phase two of the Decent Work Agenda, he suggested, was about delivering results. To do so would put the consensus to a true test. All would agree that current labour market conditions in the world were “tough”. Strong global growth alone was not the solution as inequalities measured along practically any axis were growing, most notably the inequalities of return between labour and capital. “If we accept that the ILO and others have successfully translated a popular demand in its Decent Work Agenda and also that realities of the world of work are diverging increasingly from our vision of Decent Work, it is reasonable to conclude that we are moving toward a rather decisive moment: a moment at which pent up demands for change will move us toward a situation where unless we are able to respond effectively we are going to reach a point of breakdown.” In that sense, he said he was in agreement with Mr. Katz’s warning that globalization could not be taken for granted. It was essential to move in two directions: greater coherence in international policy making, including coherence of policies of national governments in international bodies; and driving the decent

work agenda at the national level, notably through the national Decent Work Country Programmes. This placed the onus of responsibility on national trade unions, employers and governments, rather than the ILO on its own.



Ms. Mary Robinson, President of Realizing Rights: *The Ethical Globalization Initiative* recalled that she had been much inspired by the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization in her own project on The Ethical Globalization Initiative. She was pleased with the progress made since the World Commission Report was launched. Yet, a fairer globalization was still an unfulfilled promise. Her current work was focusing on putting human rights standards at the heart of governance and policy-making. The goal was to strengthen local and national capacities and voice in ways that would realize human rights, especially social and economic rights. The critical obstacle at the root of all

unfulfilled rights was the same: inequalities within and between nations and an imbalance of power and influence.

Her Initiative had been championing the work of the ILO and others on Decent Work. As concerns international trade, she expressed her concern that current developments in international negotiations were falling far short of fair. Trade reforms had to be measured against whether or not they promoted more and better jobs, and had any impact on those most disadvantaged economically. As concerns the informal economy she recalled how she had been impressed by her visit to an ILO Decent Work project in Ghana that provides an integrated approach, incorporating an innovative mix of interventions that build on individual initiative and entrepreneurship, combined with the strength of associations and collective action. She noted decent work was still rare in the discourse

on corporate social responsibility when it comes to the extensive value chains of companies. These value chains include millions of farmers, traders and artisans in the informal economy. She recalled evidence showing that where companies and governments apply themselves to promoting human rights, the results have been very positive.

She especially emphasised the importance of promoting women's rights. Women were disproportionately represented in segments of the informal

"Just as human rights are universal and apply to all of us, the right to social protection applies to all of us, no matter what kind of work we do, or where we live. I look forward to working with all of you to bring about the paradigm shift needed to get to the next phase on decent work that is needed to make globalization fairer for all."

Mary Robinson, President of Realizing Rights: The Ethical Globalization Initiative

labour force with low earnings and high poverty risk. At the same time, there were several global movements inspired or led by grassroots women leaders, including the environment movement, the shack-dwellers movement, the women's rights movement, the micro-finance movement and movements of informal sector workers such as the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) of India. All of these movements played a critical role in increasing the voice of grassroots women and the visibility of their working and living conditions, including their economic insecurities.

Finally, Ms. Robinson called upon all participants to get involved in marking the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on December 10th 2008. She suggested that the anniversary of the Universal Declaration and the 10th anniversary of the ILO's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work in 2008 could offer opportunities to move the decent work agenda forward in practical ways.

Panel of Parliamentarians

This session was organized in collaboration with IPU, which had convened a pre-Forum event for parliamentarians where participants adopted conclusions and a series of recommendations to the IPU, notably to establish a "parliamentary advisory group" on employment and decent work. The group will have ILO representation and develop specific tools to support parliamentarians working on the multiple aspects of decent work for a fair globalization, drawing inspiration from the CEB Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work.



Senator Sheila Carstairs of Canada said the parliamentarians present at the Forum adopted these recommendations because parliaments were not as actively engaged as they should be on the decent work for a fair globalization agenda. Parliamentarians, she said, were responsible for any legislative action taken in their country and should become more engaged with the ILO. She underlined the importance of the advisory group that was proposed.

Senator Heráclito Fortes of the Federative Republic of Brazil emphasized what he called the “historic importance” of this ILO-IPU event. In discussing the challenges parliamentarians face in Brazil; he noted the difficulties of enforcing labour legislation, notably on the issue of modern forms of slave labour. He highlighted the difficulties of reconciling the slow pace of the legislative process and the fast pace of changes in the labour market. He insisted on the importance of regional and inter-regional parliamentary cooperation in addressing the social dimension of globalization. He said lessons learnt from the practice of European labour legislation were beginning to be applied in the Mercosur region, notably on social protection. He underlined the need for parliamentarians and the ILO to consolidate their common work.

Mr Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, Member of the European Parliament and President of the Party of European Socialists, said it was not difficult to obtain unanimous support for decent work. The difficulty was implementation. He cited the case of European Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) that he noted had been subject to widespread concerns as to their compatibility with aspects of the Decent Work Agenda. He insisted that the world’s richest regions had to be consistent with their commitments to promoting decent work in international negotiations. He said the Decent Work Agenda was still little known among parliamentarians. Yet it was essential to integrate it in the discussion on trade, investment and development policies. He noted with concern new developments in global financial markets, notably the growth of private equity funds, hedge funds and investment banks, whose operations fell outside international regulation and whose impact, he said, could seriously undermine decent work objectives. He suggested entering into tripartite dialogue with key actors in the financial markets, with the aim of ensuring that their investment decisions are compatible with Decent Work.

“Labour and employment issues are in a sense the ones that members of parliament get elected on – or not: ‘You don’t create jobs, why would we re-elect you?’ So it’s always been on the agenda. However, Decent Work and Fair Globalization are not concepts that politicians are actually very at ease or familiar with... We need to raise awareness and inform them... In IPU we are going to make sure that we place the Decent Work Agenda more centrally on our own agenda and start energizing [our members] and bring them into these processes. There is an enormous knowledge base here. The debates we’ve had have been extraordinarily interesting.”

Anders Johnsson, Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

4. *Highlights of the Thematic Sessions*

Session 1: **Employability: Education, skills development and technology** – *Bridging knowledge gaps*



This session was chaired by **Mr. François Périgot**, Honorary President of the International Organisation of Employers (IOE). The Panel members included: **Ms. Maria Rodrigues**, Special Adviser to the Portuguese Prime Minister for the European Presidency, **Mr. Mark Richmond**, UNESCO; **Mr. Phil O'Reilly**, Business New Zealand; **Ms. Jan Eastman**, Education International

Highlights from the discussion

Participants in the discussion agreed that access to quality education was a universal human right and the pre-condition to decent work. Education was key to personal development, it helped build the foundations of employability and sustain the promotion of economic and social progress.

"I really believe the Decent Work Agenda can become a comprehensive development agenda exactly by deepening policy coherence. Focus on more and better jobs and education is at the heart of it [...] Better jobs are connected with better working conditions and depend directly on their skills content."

Maria João Rodrigues, Special Adviser to the Portuguese Prime Minister for the European Presidency

Full time, quality basic education for all was also the best answer to eliminate child labour and fight discrimination and inequalities, as the experience of countries as diverse as Brazil and Portugal was showing. The importance of encouraging access to education for girls and young women in rural areas, avoiding gender stereotypes, was also emphasized.

Overall there were an estimated 70 million children worldwide who were not in school and 774 million people who had no literacy skills. This was a major area of concern. The need

to devote more resources to the achievement of the education targets under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Education for All (EFA) campaign was raised. The global shortage of qualified teachers, given budgetary and other constraints on public expenditure, was also denounced.

"Teaching needs to be decent work itself",

Jan Eastman, Education International

Focusing on basic education for all was fundamental but alone it was not enough. In order to foster growth and development it was important to look at skills formation through the provision of secondary and tertiary education, as

well as of lifelong learning opportunities. A strong argument was made for the need of ensuring a continuum of education and training. Skills needed to be nurtured throughout the individual's working life. Lifelong learning was the only way for skills to keep pace with fast changes in technology and work organisation brought about by globalization. For this reason, employability should be promoted through a holistic approach that provides people with a "seamless chain of opportunities" as they move from school to school, from school to work and from one job to another.

Education and training systems should provide not only technical skills but also core skills for employability. The latter were consistently demanded by employers in all countries and included skills such as those relating to communication, acquisition and application of new information, problem solving and teamwork. Under globalization moreover all economic activities – large and small – were under constant pressure to innovate. It was important to prepare young people since their early schooling to be resourceful and creative. Economies paid a high premium for skills that enhance the capacity to secure and retain work, move to different jobs, and cope with changes in technology and labour market conditions. It was suggested that countries should invest more

in the identification of occupations and skills that had the greatest potential for employment creation. This should engender national discussions and involve the main players in the labour market.

The National Skills Development Strategy in South Africa

Mr. Kettleidas, Department of Labour of South Africa, described the country's National Skills Development Strategy, an initiative designed to increase investment in the development of a skilled workforce and improve the quality of education and training in South Africa. The strategy, financed with a 1% levy on companies, targets youth, women and people with disabilities. It includes adult basic education and training, recognition of prior learning, and new nationally certified training programmes named "learnerships", which cater to employed and young unemployed people and include both classroom and workplace experience. The strategy explicitly values the role of the social partners through the establishment of sectoral education and training authorities tasked to produce skills relevant to the labour market needs of each economic sector. Workers and employers are involved in the development of workplace skills plans that culminate in sectoral skills plans. In parallel, the National Industrial Policy Framework acknowledges the value of policy coherence and the need to align the skills development and education system to economic and industrial policies, the macroeconomic and regulatory environment, and modern infrastructure.

Second chance programmes were an important means of remedying education and labour market failures. Active labour market policies offering an integrated package of services, including literacy and remedial education for dropouts, labour market training, career guidance and counselling, and entrepreneurship training should be provided to promote labour market inclusion of people who had missed out prior stages of education and training or who were in need of enhancing their employability while moving to other jobs.

Governments should develop and maintain National Qualification Frameworks that enable recognition of the accumulation of learning throughout life and prior learning, including for people working in the informal economy.

All too often, however, education and training policies and systems were not interconnected. Training institutes, secondary schools and universities were not integrated. They worked as blocks and not as a coherent and coordinated whole. And no support was made available to students at the moments of transition between different types and levels of education. The rigidity of structures and the separateness of different modalities of provision were doing a disservice to young people. At

"Ministries and national agencies appear to inhabit 'silos' with very thick walls, narrow doors and few if any windows. [...] The Minister of Education and the Minister of Labour typically do not talk together, nor do their staff. The costs of this lack of coherence and coordination in policies and programmes are high in terms of efficiency, relevance, waste, duplication and effectiveness."

Marc Richmond, UNESCO

precisely the moment when they needed support, good advice and encouragement, they were often rebuffed, or channelled down narrow tracks. In addition, the relation between policies on education and vocational and technical training, on the one hand, and economic, employment, industrial and financial policies, on the other hand, were disjointed and lacked integration.

One key policy issue was “to make those systems to work systematically”. Policy coherence and more effective coordination across systems and institutions, including relevant ministries, had to be sought at all levels of education, training and lifelong learning. Together with relevant regional and multilateral institutions, the ILO and UNESCO were called upon to enhance cooperation to help member States achieve greater policy coherence on those issues.

Another major concern was strengthening the links between education and the world of work. Examples were given where the social partners played an important role in making education and training more effective and more relevant to the labour market. Social dialogue on national skills policies and strategies, from the stage of formulation to their implementation, had proven effective in crafting solutions that bridged the gap between schools and the world of work.

Building the skills levels of people in New Zealand

Mr. Phil O'Reilly of Business New Zealand recalled how deeply the social partners in New Zealand care about skills. They joined forces with key education providers and the Government to launch an ambitious national workplace literacy action plan. They work closely on programmes to raise national productivity rates and help up skill the indigenous people of New Zealand, the Maori. They agreed education, lifelong learning and targeted skill enhancement should be key items of the New Zealand's Decent Work country programme. To support such efforts the Government had set up a formal tripartite consultative mechanism to regularly engage on national skills strategies and policy. The forum, known as *Skill New Zealand*, is chaired the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, and includes the Minister of Labour, Chief Executives of key government agencies and the leaders of the employers' and workers' organizations, thereby ensuring coherence and effectiveness in the provision of skills nationwide. Another policy innovation is the industry training system, which enables over 150,000 employees every year to gain industry-relevant skills and qualifications. Training is designed by industry, delivered on-the-job and portable. Qualifications are also interlinked, so that employees can use the credits they gain through workplace training for their personal and career development. Industry Training Organisations are public-private partnerships. They are set up and owned by industry, with union representation and with the Government funding part of the costs of training.

“International experience shows that whenever countries have been able to catch up and grow fast, they had a secret, and the secret was a good interface between education and training and companies, at the local level, at the national level and through international networks.”

Maria João Rodrigues, Special Adviser to the Portuguese Prime Minister for the European Presidency

Sustained action to improve employability was a shared responsibility among a wide range of actors, requiring a common vision and effective linkages and partnerships. Public and private providers of education and training, for instance, had a role to play at both the local and the national levels. The issue was to establish policy frameworks to help achieve each country’s overall objectives of equity and quality of education.

The question of learning to learn was very important. Learning was taking place in all institutions, at the workplace, in family and social life as well as in schools and universities. Young people could access information and knowledge from a large variety of sources, including the Internet. Given their face-to-face nature, educational institutions had a fundamental role to play in strengthening the capacities of young people to assess what was valuable knowledge, interact among themselves and learn about citizenship. “Learning to be, learning to know, learning to do and learning to live together” were the critical steps to bridging the knowledge gaps.

Local partnerships for education, training and decent jobs: the EQUAL experience in Portugal

EQUAL is an EU-wide initiative that promotes a better model for working life by fighting discrimination and exclusion. In Portugal, EQUAL has supported various projects to provide education and training and facilitate integration into the workplace for women, immigrants, people with disabilities, older workers and other vulnerable groups (e.g. *RH XXI*, *Emprego Apoiado* and *Sem Fronteiras*). According to Director Ana Vale each project was developed through partnerships involving a diversity of public and private entities: job centres, employers, training providers, local authorities, NGOs, schools, health services, etc. As shown by their formal evaluation, this was a critical factor behind the good results. Successful responses to problems of unemployment and discrimination against vulnerable groups have to be community based, multidimensional and tailored to each individual – partnership involving local players is the cornerstone to blend those elements in programme formulation and implementation.

“The most valuable role the ILO can contribute is to ensure that experiences such as those we heard around the table this morning are spread and shared so that the social partners and other policy makers can pick up on those good practices and bring them to their countries in the most efficient and fast way. Because skills are the key to success in globalization.”

Phil O'Reilly, Business New Zealand

The international community should assist the public sector, industry, trade unions, parents and communities in fostering public-private partnerships at national and local levels to deliver education and training that could match the requirements of competitiveness of companies with workers' aspiration to decent work and the need to foster cohesive societies. The ILO, in particular, should act as a catalyst in collect-

ing and disseminating knowledge on good practices among governments, the social partners and other interested stakeholders.

Session 2: Upgrading work and enterprises in the informal economy – *Organizing for voice and participation*



This session was chaired by **Mr. Manuel Viage**, General Secretary of the National Union of Angolan Workers. The Panel members included: **Mr. Yash Tandon**, South Centre; **Mr. Charles Gore**, UNCTAD; **Mr. Jean-Yves Barcelo**, UN-Habitat; **Ms. Hilda Sánchez**, ICFTU-ORIT.

Highlights of the discussion

The spread of the informal economy was described as a world-wide phenomenon, in both developing and industrialized countries. Globalization was a contributing cause of this process, especially as a result of intense competition and drastic industrial restructuring following widespread liberalization and technological change. The nature of the process of “informalization” varied between a range of different situations. In developed countries it took the form of casualization of formal employment. In developing countries, especially the poorest ones, increasing informalization was associated with the declining ability of the agricultural sector to absorb the workforce productively while non-agricultural sectors were unable to generate enough productive and formal employment. This unsuccessful “transition to employment” was dramatically visible in the explosion of informal activities in urban slums in many poor countries. Informal work was also often correlated with poor governance and the absence of the rule of law.

Fair globalization could not be achieved without adequately addressing those challenges. But those were highly complex issues requiring coherent sets of international, national and local policies. An integrated strategy had to look at the synergies among policies dealing with land reform/access and registration, enhancing agricultural productivity, taxation, property rights, skills and technological development, macroeconomic and structural policies supportive domestic demand growth. Opinions differed with respect to the right mix of policies and measures. Some insisted on the importance of securing legal entitlements, while others emphasized the importance of promoting patterns of economic development capable of generating sufficient productive jobs. Some argued for a “paradigm shift” in mainstream approaches to development and poverty reduction – one that would focus on production and employment and

“What is needed is a better balance between export growth and domestic demand growth. If you do not have domestic demand growth then you will not have upgrading of informal sector work and enterprises. This was clear in the successful cases of Vietnam and Bangladesh – where the critical mechanism was that agricultural productivity stimulated domestic demand for non-agricultural goods: services, construction and small-scale industry produced by the poor in informal sector enterprises. The dynamic informal sector enterprises could then upgrade into formal sector enterprises.”

Charles Gore, Chief, Research and Policy Analysis, Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes, UNCTAD

“Decent Work continues to be a key challenge for all the people who live in rural areas and principally for those who depend upon agriculture for their livelihoods [...] We really have a lot of work to do in identifying what the key problems are, in generating the data needed to characterize particularly what the informal economy looks like for agricultural workers, and then to address these needs.”

Eve Crowley, Sustainable Development Department, FAO



a better balance between exports and domestic demand, as it had occurred in countries such as Vietnam and Bangladesh.

A key question related to adequate policy formulation was the issue of not having reliable labour market data. Urgent attention had to be given to address this problem and it was recommended that international organizations including the ILO invest more in building domestic statistical capabilities and internationally comparable definitions and measures of the informal economy.

It was also suggested that promoting fair globalization and upgrading informal enterprises could not be done without a change in multinational enterprise practices, especially vis-à-vis their suppliers in global value chains.

Organizing informal economy actors (workers, self-employed, micro-entrepreneurs) was itself seen as a

major challenge. Trade unions' representation role and mandates should be recognized and respected. The question of how to give representation and voice to informal economy actors at the international level was also raised.

"In African countries, the informal sector accounts for between 50 and 90 per cent of the labour force [...] The informal sector deserves a voice in the ILO."

Yash Tandon, Director of the South Centre

Experience has shown that trade unions and NGOs can effectively join forces around common agendas. It was suggested that partnerships could be developed around common objectives such as developing capabilities within the informal economy.

The role of local authorities in scaling-up successful grassroots initiatives was emphasized. The UN-Habitat's experience with supporting Community Contracts between local authorities and community-based organizations in Asia and Africa was a promising approach. It was also suggested that local authorities could take the lead in coordinating organizational efforts at the local level, while the ILO should help develop a global integrated strategy to upgrade the informal economy with relevant agencies in the context of UN reform.

UN-Habitat Community Contracts

Mr. Jean-Yves Barcelo presented UN-Habitat's collaboration with ILO in developing and supporting the use of Community Contracting mechanisms to establish contracts between local authorities, community-based organizations and other local actors that provide employment through slum up-grading and small-scale infrastructure projects. Community Contracts were initiated in the 1980s in Sri Lanka to enable a local authority or government agency to contract out physical works directly with a local community, which is actively involved from the planning to the evaluation stage. The major difficulty was to overcome legal barriers related to sole-source bidding and providing a legal status to the entity representing the community. Community Contracts are now a national instrument in Sri Lanka and have been experimented in other parts of Asia and in Africa, especially in post-disaster reconstruction. The Community Contracting approach promoted by ILO and UN-Habitat supports organization building and negotiation capacities, and clarifies rights and obligations, roles and responsibilities in the planning and implementation of programmes (local public-private partnerships).

Session 3: Migration for work, within borders and internationally – *Securing the benefits, diminishing the risks of worker mobility*



This session was chaired by **Mr. John Sweeney**, President of AFL-CIO. The Panel members included: **Mr. Giuliano Amato**, Minister of the Interior of Italy; **Mr. Jesús Caldera Sánchez Capitán**, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs of Spain; **Ms. Caridad T. Sri Tharan**, Migrant Forum in Asia; **Mr. John Bingham**, International Catholic Migration Commission; **Ms. Jacqueline Mugo**, Federation of Kenya Employers

“Illegal migration is directly connected to the prospect of jobs in the underground economy. Without jobs in the underground economy there would be no incentive to come irregularly to our countries. But the best way to fight illegal migration is to make legal migration less difficult [] If we do not openly accept a certain level of legal migration we are not shutting our doors, because in the globalized world doors are open. We keep our doors open to illegal migrants.”

Giuliano Amato, Minister of Interior of Italy and member of the World Commission Social Dimension of Globalization

Highlights from the discussion

International labour migration was a core feature of globalization. It could be beneficial for countries of origin and countries of destination, which needed migrant workers. Therefore, channels of regular migration should be expanded and legal job opportunities offered to migrants.

Demand for labour was the primary reason for migration. If it was not met regularly, it would be met infor-

mally and act as a magnet for illegal migrants. Recruitment procedures should also be regulated and measures put in place to fight trafficking.

Labour inspection needed to be extended and enforced to avoid exploitation of irregular migrant workers and violations of their human rights. This was especially so for women migrant workers, who often worked in occupations not covered by labour law, such as domestic work. There were dramatic decent work deficits for illegal migrant workers even in the richest economies; migrant workers were often engaged in dirty, demeaning and dangerous jobs and were subject to exploitation, abuse and xenophobia.

"We have major problems in Europe with illegal migratory flows from some African countries. There are some young Africans who get on a flimsy boat knowing that they might lose their lives on that journey. This is not just a migratory phenomenon. It is a humanitarian crisis."

Jesús Caldera Sánchez Capitán, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs of Spain

Regularization of irregular migrant workers employed in occupations where there was a demonstrated shortage of native workers was seen as in the best interest of countries of destination. In Spain for instance, regularization improved the working and living conditions of migrant workers and helped redress the social security system. Social dialogue was instrumental in leading this regularization.

Social dialogue and immigration policy in Spain

Spain is a main receiver of migrant workers, in particular from Africa, many of them entering the country illegally. According to Minister Jesús Caldera Sánchez Capitán, immigration policy in Spain was now based on social dialogue. Government, employers and trade unions together decided to set up a system where migratory flows were regulated in accordance with labour market needs. In this model, if there were vacancies that could not be filled by Spanish workers, they could be publicized abroad and foreign workers contracted in their home country. Efforts were made to ensure that those legal migrants were socially integrated and enjoyed the same rights as national workers. As a result, 200,000 foreign workers entered Spain legally in 2006, seventy per cent of them seasonal workers returning home at the end of the season. Spanish employers paid the transport, provided accommodation, and applied national labour legislation. According to the new policy, once a worker had completed four seasons, he could apply for permanent residence in Spain. A policy of cooperation with countries of origin was also in place, based on the principle of mutual respect and joint responsibility. This includes a role for governments in sending countries in pre-selecting workers, joint policing of trafficking, and investment in training. Spain was promoting 15 vocational schools in West African countries for workers who could be hired in their native countries or in Spain. Finally, there had been initiatives to make public opinion in Spain aware of the positive effects of migration and encourage tolerance and cross-cultural understanding.

The benefits of novel programmes of temporary and circular migration were extensively discussed, although these programmes were put into question.

One argument suggested that these programs ultimately led to settlement. Qualified workers in particular were most likely to remain in the receiving countries and evidence showed that temporary schemes worked well only for genuine seasonal migration. Addressing the root causes of migration – differences in demography, democracy and development – was the secure way to ensure return. The other point was that migration under temporary schemes might undermine the rights of migrants and their integration in receiving countries.

“The question is how to do away with the demonstrations of xenophobia and the growth of political nationalism that are associated with growing migration. We need to educate people to mutual respect and tolerance; without that it will be impossible to give a response to the legitimate request of migrant workers for decent work and a dignified life.”

Aurelio Juri, Member of the Parliament of Slovenia

“In many countries, especially receiving ones, much of the political and social dynamics seem to come from a weird kind of disconnect where a hard worker who comes to a country is not seen as a worker but as an immigrant and suddenly any kind of solidarity, any kind of affinity and any kind of shared experience are gone.”

John Bingham, International Catholic Commission for Migration

“Africa is losing doctors, pharmacists, nurses, dentists, and other technicians. Lawyers are also leaving [...] this is a cycle that is self-defeating. From the point of view of employers it has meant an increase in the cost of employment and the loss of human resources needed to drive growth.”

Jacqueline Mugo, Federation of Kenya Employers

Brain drain was strongly denounced, resulting in loss of skills in vital sectors such as health care and education. The provision of services, especially in poor and in rural areas, was severely compromised in many sending countries. Panellists and participants in the discussion bore witness to the costs borne by their own sending countries. In the Philippines, it was

claimed that public health care services were severely undermined by the lack of doctors and nurses while education was threatened by the departure of teachers in disciplines such as science and math. The situation was also quite serious in the whole of Africa.

It was suggested that some compensating mechanisms should be devised and measures introduced to facilitate the return of migrant workers and their integration in the native societies. One panellist noted that the current discussion at WTO on Mode 4 was mainly relevant to highly skilled and qualified professionals, who were not among those most in need of decent work. Greater attention should be paid to unskilled and poorly qualified workers. Civil society could play an effective advocacy and supportive role.

Freedom of association for workers crossing borders was a basic human right and migrant workers must have the opportunity to secure regularized legal status. Experience showed that when the offer was clear and genuine, irregular workers were very quick to regularize their position.

The Migrant Forum in Asia

The Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA) is a regional network of NGOs, associations and trade unions of migrant workers and individual advocates who are committed to protect and promote the rights and welfare of migrant workers. Founding member Caridad Sri Tharan emphasized MFA is guided by a vision of an alternative world system based on respect for human rights and dignity, social justice and gender equity. The MFA promotes concerted action to address discriminatory laws and policies, violence against migrant women and men, unjust living conditions, lack of access to health care and occupational safety. Initiatives include the launch of Migrant Savings and Alternative Investment Programmes to economically prepare migrants for their eventual return and reintegration and to mobilize migrants' assets, knowledge and skills for social entrepreneurship, productive investment and community development. The Forum is also looking into opportunities to mobilize diaspora philanthropy. These schemes however need an enabling framework and incentives schemes in the sending countries to be sustained and scaled up. The Forum is also engaged in awareness campaigns and advocacy for the ratification of international conventions and the promotion of policy frameworks to ensure better protection of migrant work.

“The realization that under globalization migration is here to stay has had a tremendous impact in enhancing the quality of social dialogue in Kenya. This is an area where we all agreed something had to be done. Under the auspices of the Government, employers' and workers organizations are implementing a decent work country programme to craft a policy to rapidly develop skills in those areas where we have major gaps. We also moved out into the community to understand the impact of migration from rural to urban areas.”

Jacqueline Mugo, Federation of Kenya Employers

Ratification and implementation of the two ILO conventions on migrant workers and of the International Convention on the Protection of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families was called for. The ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration should be implemented at national level as a concrete step toward improving the life of migrant workers.

In order to better protect the victims of trafficking, a call was also made to encourage greater coherence between, on one hand, the ILO Multilateral Framework and other international instruments to protect migrant workers and, on the other hand, the international instruments on forced labour and contemporary slavery.

There was general recognition of the benefits of increased remittances observed in recent years. International organizations were called upon to coordinate their efforts to come up with better reporting on the value of remittances. But remittances should not be seen as a substitute for government social spending or for meeting ODA targets. Policies should aim at dealing with the deep roots of international migration – poverty and the lack of decent work in sending countries. Migration should become a choice, not a necessity.

«I had a lot of information and suggestions for my organization from this Forum. We need to work harder on the ratification of the international conventions on migrant workers and their families, in particular in receiving countries. We also need to work harder on organizing the migrant workers themselves and form them into associations, into trade unions. This is the only way they can fight for their rights to decent work.»

Caridad Sri Tharan, Migrant Forum in Asia

Session 4: Social protection policies for social cohesion and economic development – *Moving towards a global social floor?*



This session was chaired by **Mr. Carlos Tomada**, Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Security of Argentina. The Panel members included: **Mr. Aart de Geus**, OECD; **Mr. Roberto Bissio**, Social Watch; **Ms. Suddha Pillai**, Ministry of Labour and Employment, India; **Mr. Helmut Schwartzer**, Ministry of Social Security, Brazil; **Mr. João Proença**, General Workers' Union of Portugal

Highlights of the discussion

Social protection is a human right for everybody enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This was the ethical basis of national social security systems. However, social security was not only a human right; it was also an essential social and economic need. In a context of intensified labour market turbulence and social dislocations associated with globalisation, national economies could not function without social security systems that provided the basic level of security to residents and workers to help them cope with those rapid changes.

Social security facilitated social inclusion, fostered economic growth (notably by maintaining minimal levels of effective demand by the unemployed), helped to eradicate poverty and strengthen democracy. It was thus an indispensable element of national development strategies and should be seen as an investment rather than a net cost. The criticisms and cutbacks that social security systems were subjected to in many countries during the last decades

were justified on the basis of the wrong priorities and flawed design of those systems, rather than founded on objective evidence against social transfers and social security benefits in principle.

There was now growing consensus that the social and economic need for social security should be translated into a global social floor. The session's background paper listed a set of core benefits that could be considered as the social security components of a social floor and used as a starting point for a wider debate.⁶

"[...] Some of the most open economies in the world have the largest welfare states. This is not an accident – people often only will accept the uncertainties of open markets if they know that there is a decent social floor to protect them if their jobs are swept away by economic change. If anything, the need for social protection is highest, the faster the change and the more open economies are."

Aart de Geus, Deputy-Secretary-General, OECD

As concerned existing experiences, the OECD panellist emphasized that some of the most successful and most open economies had the most extensive welfare states.

New, large programmes in India and Brazil were discussed during the session. They suggested that basic levels of social security were affordable and compatible with growth and development in the context of a developing country. Other participants, particularly those from Africa, said they found those

initiatives highly encouraging and inspiring. The example of Argentina was also mentioned, where the Unemployed Heads of Households Plan introduced in the midst of a financial crisis suggested that social protection mechanisms could help the country to overcome economic shocks.

The Bolsa-Família Programme in Brazil

Introduced in 2003, the *Bolsa-Família* Programme consists of a conditional cash transfer to families of up to a maximum of US\$60 per month, requiring children's regular school attendance and regular health visits for the whole family. In 2006, over 11 million benefits were disbursed through this scheme. Between 2003 and 2006, the poorest decile in household survey data rose by 10 per cent while the richest grew at lower rates, suggesting a positive contribution of the scheme to reducing poverty and inequality. The cost of the programme amounted to 0.3 per cent of GDP which had been financed out of revenue earmarked for social security. In recent years the availability of funds was strengthened by the positive results of the public service pension reform in 2003 and the proceeds of a tax on financial transactions, fixed at 0.38 per cent. According to Mr. Helmut Schwartzer, Ministry of Social Security of Brazil, the tax did not have the negative economic consequences its detractors had warned of when it was first introduced. One key challenge, he said, was to achieve the institutionalization of the *Bolsa Família* as a State policy to ensure its continued existence beyond the current government.

⁶ These included: universal child benefits; universal access to essential health services; some financial relief for the working poor unable to earn enough for their families to escape poverty as a result of under-employment or low productivity; and basic tax-financed pensions for the elderly, the disabled and those who have lost the main breadwinner in a family.



New social security legislation and employment guarantee in India

Ms. Sudha Pillai, Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment, presented some innovative measures recently introduced by the Government of India. Only 28 million of India's 369 million workers are in the formal economy and are covered by a range of social security laws introduced since the early 1950s. In order to provide some form of social protection to those left in the unorganized sector, the Government has introduced new legislation concerning death and disability insurance, basic health insurance and basic universal pension schemes. The Government also announced three specific programmes: the '*Aam Aadmi Bima Yojna*' (Common Man Insurance scheme) to provide life and disability cover to all the rural landless households (around 15 million people are likely to benefit); the National Old Age Pension Scheme (around 16 million people below poverty line and above 65 years of age will be covered); and the ambitious '*Rahtriya Swasthya Bima Yojna*' (National Health Insurance Scheme) to provide health cover to all below-poverty-line workers in the unorganized sector (around 300 million persons are expected to get the benefit in the next five years). In addition, the Government has enacted the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, which provides mandatory assurance of at least 100 days of employment every year at the minimum wage, for at least one person, in every rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. The work, which has to be labour-intensive and primarily unskilled, mainly relates to building rural infrastructure. The scheme currently includes 330 backward districts but it is expected to cover the entire country within five years. Evaluation in some of the districts where it was properly implemented showed that the Act has actually increased rural employment, reduced poverty and reduced distress rural to urban migration.

Social security systems were considered affordable at any stage of economic development, provided the political will was sufficient. However, poorer countries might need external support to kick-start social protection programmes. Investing in social protection had to become more widely recognized as an essential component of any viable development strategy and in meeting the Millennium Development Goals. International financial institutions and the donor community in particular had to step up their support in developing the social security component of a global social floor and avoid undermining such national efforts in that regard through inappropriate policy advice. Some participants expressed their concern for the financing of social security through privatization, mentioning examples of privatization of pension schemes that proved inequitable and highly cost-ineffective.

There was some debate on benefit priorities, such as between spending on the elderly or on young families. This was seen as probably less of a dilemma in developing countries where cash benefits were likely to benefit all generations in households. The question was also whether the size of social spending should be taken as a given; or whether in the face of social security needs reallocations within overall government budgets should be considered, relying on new sources of financing such as taxes on financial transactions as introduced in Brazil.

The global social floor was considered a widely recognised element of the decent work agenda. A number of participants expressed the need to develop a new ILO standard that would codify the modern principles for social security so as to define a basic level of benefits that all people should be able to enjoy. It was suggested that the ILO conducts an open-minded tripartite discussion on this possibility.

More broadly, the importance of social dialogue in developing more comprehensive and universal social policies was emphasized, as well as the need to build broader coalitions between governments, international organizations and civil society organisations and social movements to mobilize the necessary political will to bring universal social security into the development policy mainstream.

“A new social contract is badly needed at the national and global levels to balance individual rights and social rights, both of which are universally recognized, and to balance global rules and disciplines with the national ‘policy space’ in which democratic debate shapes each country’s own priorities [...] The question is not whether social security is possible under globalization, but rather if global civilized existence is at all possible without implementing the universal human right to social security.”

Roberto Bissio, Social Watch and Director of Instituto Tercer Mundo

Session 5: Policy coherence among international organizations – *Creating the tools to make it work*



This session was chaired by **Mr. Sha Zukang**, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs. The Panel members included: **Mr. Josep Borrell**, European Parliament and Global Progressive Forum; **Mr. Raymond Parsons**, Business Unity South Africa (BUSA); **Mr. Saleh Nsouli**, International Monetary Fund (IMF); **Mr. Ricardo Meléndez-Ortiz**, International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD); **Mr. Zwelinzima Vavi**, Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU).

Highlights of the discussion

International organizations share common ultimate goals such as global peace, development and growth, but the institutional division of labour, specialization and different policy paradigms give rise to situations where parts of the multilateral system could promote policies that offset the objectives of other parts. The need for international policy coherence is prompted by growing economic and social interdependences, as no international organization can achieve its mandated objectives on its own.

Policy coherence should be defined in terms of a given outcome. Participants in the discussion generally agreed that there was growing political consensus at the international level on making full and productive employment and decent work for all a central objective of relevant national and international policies to support fair globalization. This required that more coherent sets of national and international policies should be put in place. The challenge was partly one of weak mechanisms for dialogue and coordination among agencies,

at both national and international levels, and partly one of developing a shared vision of how different policy frameworks could converge and contribute to achieve that central objective.

Many speakers indicated the need to develop a new overarching paradigm to guide policy coherence for employment and decent work. Some called for new thinking in development, focusing on dimensions of social and environmental sustainability beyond simple measures of GDP growth. Some emphasized the need to develop local industrial capabilities and expand domestic demand. Some called for a philosophical change in the attitude of key international institutions, whereby social concerns were given greater consideration.

“There are two core areas where we need far greater coherence across the international institutions. One is support for decent work. That means respect for the ILO’s core labour standards, a living wage, and freedom from the fear of abuse, injury or even death on the job. The other is support for equitable growth in the developing world. We need economic and trade policies that improve the living standards of the majority of our people.”

Zwelinzima Vavi, General Secretary of Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and member of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization

It was generally acknowledged that there remained profound differences between different policy frameworks to which the various agencies subscribed, which in turn implied different policy solutions. As one speaker observed, neo-classical schools of economic thought were emphasizing market incentives, productivity and competitiveness while more Keynesian-oriented approaches were more appreciative of institutionalized mechanisms for social transfer in order to alleviate unemployment problems and stimulate growth, i.e. of “the need to redistribute incomes, not just opportunities”. Reconciliation was not easy, with some participants arguing such diversity should be maintained if not encouraged.

Some examples were made of policies of major international institutions that seemed to contradict the objective of decent work. The “Employing Workers Indicator” contained in the World Bank’s *Doing Business Report* was denounced as inappropriate, inaccurate and detrimental to the respect of workers’ rights. The International Monetary Fund was called upon to step up the supply of emergency financing in order to reduce the incentive for emerging economies to accumulate vast amounts of reserves that could rather be invested domestically. Many speakers expressed their apprehension for the current deadlock in the multilateral trade negotiations at WTO and the proliferation of regional and bilateral agreements, which was leading to the erosion of the key principle of non-discrimination and to a loss of confidence in the rules-based multilateral framework.

Specific concern was expressed for the potential implications of the current NAMA negotiations on industrial tariff liberalization; the current approach, it was argued, could reduce the policy space developing countries needed in order to develop their own productive capacities, leading to “deindustrialization” and greater unemployment.

If a new overarching paradigm for employment and decent work was yet to be reached, there was a common feeling among all participants in the discus-

"I think there is benefit to the principle of comparative advantage and what is important is that institutions enter into a dialogue so that they understand the implications, say of labour policies for macro-economic stability and the implications of macro-economic stability for labour policies. And there you can generate a coherent approach, but it has to be at the level of the country."

Saleh M. Nsouli, Director, Offices in Europe, IMF

sion that the key international agencies should intensify dialogue among themselves in order to broker new thinking and develop new policy approaches. Constructive dialogue at that level, while respecting the mandate and specialization of each agency, could eventually lead to policy solutions which all agencies could support, and which in turn could be tailored to provide effective policy advice to individual countries.

Steps in that direction had already been made. One example was the ILO's Policy Coherence Initiative, which provided an informal space where technical staff of international agencies could regularly exchange views and experiences on issues related to productive employment and decent work for all. More should be done in terms of promoting joint initiatives and research programmes.

In the area of trade, the WTO and the ILO had decided to improve upon their technical collaboration and jointly conduct a study on what was known, and with what degree of confidence, on the relationship between trade and employment. A new round of research was underway, focusing in particular on the interaction between informality and trade. This was welcomed as, in the words of one of the panellist, it reflected a marked evolution from the earlier "very simplistic notion of an automatic relationship between trade openness, growth and poverty reduction."

Much collaboration on employment and decent work issues was going on among UN agencies in the framework of the quest for system-wide coherence. UNDP and ILO, in particular, had engaged in several initiatives including regional studies, capacity building and technical cooperation projects.

Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work

The Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work is a multilateral, system-wide effort to create a shared understanding and coherent policy and action to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all and contribute also to the MDGs. Mandated by and an integral part of both an inter-agency process through the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination and an inter-governmental process through the UN ECOSOC, the Toolkit has four main components, each of which is being implemented through an inclusive participatory methodology;

- A self-assessment checklist based on the four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda for the multilateral agencies and other users to examine their policies, programmes and activities through the lens of employment and decent work and, by taking into account the impact and implications, contribute to the common goal of decent work for all;

- Knowledge sharing, including through an interactive website, for agencies, national stakeholders and development partners to share expertise, experience and tools for promoting employment and decent work;
- Country-level application to mainstream employment and decent work in national development frameworks and, thereby, promote policy coherence and programme convergence within the UN Country Team and also among government agencies and key social partners; and
- Capacity building to equip UN staff, national stakeholders and other development partners with greater awareness, understanding and capacity to enhance employment and decent work outcomes at global and national levels.

Several speakers referred to the value of the approach used in the Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work adopted by the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) chaired by Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon. The Toolkit, which had been presented to the Forum by Mr. Mats Karlsson, was engaging all UN agencies, including the Bretton Woods institutions, in a simple and practical process to review their policies and programmes through the lens of employment and decent work, thereby contributing to greater understanding and revealing linkages and potential areas for cooperation among agencies. The next step was to collect evidence about policy solutions and transfer such knowledge to the countries.

“I looked at the Toolkit for UNCTAD and my comment was that ILO needs to invest in data. You will not be able to mainstream productive employment and decent work into organizations’ work unless you have better data. The data on employment trends in developing countries in general is very bad. [...] This needs to be sorted out.”

Charles Gore, Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes, UNCTAD

One serious obstacle to greater coherence was the lack of data on labour market trends in developing countries, especially with regard to the informal economy. It was recommended that the ILO should invest more in boosting national statistical capacities and improve the provision of internationally comparable datasets on employment and labour market outcomes.

Participants also shared the conviction that “policy coherence started at home”. Greater coordination and coherence among the objectives of different ministries within a country was a conduit to greater coherence in the action of the international organizations where they were represented. Examples were given of the practical challenges this implied, for instance in terms of increasing the capacity of officials in social ministries to grasp issues in the areas of international trade and finance, and vice versa. Greater inter-ministerial coordination was also a requisite to carry out more effective and comprehensive national economic and social policies and, for countries in need of technical assistance and development finance, to better assess and use outside resources for domestic purposes.

Policy coherence at home required genuine social dialogue and transparency, as underlined by the experience of South Africa where a tripartite

body, the National Economic and Development Council (NEDLAC), had been instrumental in capturing the goal of decent work in a wide set of growth and development objectives.

Looking at the variety of national circumstances and experiences it was clear that there was no one-size-fits-all policy mix which could be adopted globally for implementation at the national level. Several speakers underlined that international policy coherence should not imply a loss in the variety of policy choices available to countries. Some gave examples of what they described as policy coherence “of the wrong kind” which had led to questionable social and economic outcomes, for instance coherence around the so-called “Washington Consensus” policies adopted in the 1990s in Latin America and elsewhere.

Rather, it was recommended that the international system should provide countries with a variety of evidence-based policy solutions. It was up to national governments to decide which options better fit local circumstances and how to manage possible trade-offs between different policy objectives.

“A country should have the opportunity to choose among several paradigms embedded in the approach of different international institutions. I would say that having a diversity of suppliers of development financing, development technical assistance and development research, what some might call duplication or overlap, makes in fact eminent sense.”

Aldo Caliari, Center of Concern

“International policy coherence must be based on the notion that compromises at national level are necessary. International organizations should provide frameworks for countries themselves to decide what is best and provide assistance to make those compromising choices in the most well-informed way.”

Phil O’Reilly, Business New Zealand

In order to move ahead in promoting greater policy coherence for employment and decent work, it was suggested to focus on a few specific areas of central concern where the key institutions could cooperate to forge a common approach, for instance the destabilizing potential of global financial imbalances, the need for employment-friendly macroeconomic strategies, the framework for sustainable enterprises, and the capacity of developing countries to participate meaningfully in international trade negotiations.

Other issues were mentioned that could be the topic of future policy coherence initiatives: e.g. the global production shifts related to the rise of India and China; the disconnection between the operations of the global financial system and the needs of the real economy, and the implications of the move to a low carbon global economy.

Finally, international policy coherence was a broader topic that should also be looked at in the light of the discussion on the review of the current system of global governance. Confidence in the existing international institutions, one speaker said, was often weak. They needed to regain the trust of their stakeholders by means of greater openness and transparency in their procedures and some realignment of their structures, including voting structures, to new economic and political balances. More voices should be heard in that discussion, particularly those of developing countries.

“To enhance coherence and cooperation global economic institutions should opt for:

- *Increased transparency and more openness [...] to ensure that more voices are heard and information shared.*
- *Better enforcement of the international rule of law. This means that principles and not just power can shape certain global economic relations. There are many areas where the law would make for a better globalization if it were properly enforced.*
- *There is a need to enhance the ability of developing countries to participate meaningfully in global discussions which affect their interests. Capacity building is essential to effective consultation and decision-making by stakeholders who need assistance in assessing the impact of proposed changes, whether domestic or global, on their economies.”*

Raymond Parsons, Business Unity South African (BUSA) and Overall Business Convenor of the National Economic and Development Council of South Africa (NEDLAC)

Session 6: Decent work opportunities for young women and men: Overcoming discrimination and disadvantage – *Equality in diversity: A dream or a necessity?*



This session was chaired by **Mr. Ashraf Tabani**, President of the Employers' Federation of Pakistan. The Panel members included: **Mr. Carlos Lupi**, Minister of Labour and Employment, Brazil; **Mr. António D. Pitra Neto**, Minister for Public Administration, Employment and Social Security, Angola; **Mr. Gilles de Robien**, Ambassador with responsibility for promoting social cohesion, France; **Ms. Barbara Byers**, Canadian Labour Congress; **Mr. Carvalho da Silva**, General Confederation of the Portuguese Workers; **Mr. Ariosto Manrique**, Youth Commission of the Mexican Employers' Confederation.

"There is much valuable experience in Latin America with programmes for youth employment focusing on capacity building, entrepreneurship, apprenticeship etc. Some are driven by the public sector, some by the private sector. What is lacking is a coherent intersectoral approach that integrates employment, labour and social policies and builds on the involvement of the social partners and the youth themselves."

Maria Claudia Camacho, Organization of American States

Highlights from the discussion

Economic development was critical to meet the youth employment challenge – a challenge shared by both developed and developing countries. Responses at national and global levels should be informed by a vision that valued equality and solidarity across generations.

Achieving decent work for youth required integrated and coherent policy

frameworks spanning education and training, alongside economic and social policies. The international community together with national governments should enhance coherence between policies and agreements that had an impact on youth employment.

Quality and relevance of education and training by and large affected the type and pace of youth transition to the world of work, and enabled young people to become active citizens. Apprenticeship, career guidance, labour market information and other measures bringing students and teachers closer to enterprises had proven to be effective in making this transition smooth and should be part of regular programmes offered by education and training institutions.

Measures to prevent discrimination could help young people avoid falling into destructive behaviour, including drug addiction. These measures should be part of education and training curricula and involve schools, parents and their communities.

Policies to fight youth unemployment and discrimination in France

Mr. Gilles de Robien, former Minister of Education, recalled how in France youth unemployment and discrimination had been a policy priority for long time, which had translated into the adoption of several provisions to encourage training and lifelong education, the upgrading of skills in line with the changing market requirements, and the strengthening of apprenticeship schemes. Special attention had been given to career guidance through the creation of an *ad hoc* Inter-ministerial Authority. Among the measures adopted were the introduction of orientation interviews in school at the age of 15, information sessions about the world of work, special facilities for young people with disabilities and the introduction of a charter of commitment of companies to ensure equality of opportunities.

It was also important to ensure that all young workers had extensive health and safety education and training from the moment they stepped into the workplace as it was known that young workers were over-represented not only in part-time, low-wage jobs but also in industrial accidents and work-related inju-

Youth employment programmes in Brazil

Many important programmes for youth employment have been launched in Brazil over the past 4 years, targeting in particular the poorest groups. Of those programmes, Minister Lupi underscored the more than 6,000 alliances formed between the Federal Government and local authorities in all States to provide a wide range of training courses to prepare young people between 6 and 24 for their integration into the labour market. Those alliances included partnership with local churches, universities and NGOs. Partnerships were also established at the national level with the private sector, including with industrial associations and major financial and media conglomerates. Despite all those efforts about 7 million young people were estimated to still be out of school and without a job. The Government intended to quadruple its investment in qualifying and preparing young people for the labour market over the 2008-10 period.

“Education is very important, but I am concerned we are only talking about education. We have to think of the current global economic model, the interdependencies created by international trade and foreign investment, the constraints on public policies, the reduction of the role of the State to a minimum.”

Graciela Rodrigues, International Gender and Trade Network

ries. Measures to help young workers reconcile work and family responsibilities should also be encouraged.

There were many factors which could make young people vulnerable to exclusion from the labour market because they had grown up without proper education, adequate nutrition and housing. Others encountered discrimination at work regardless of their pre-work background. Removing barriers of access to education of girls and

young women was of the uttermost priority and a way to prevent discrimination at work in many countries. Gender and race issues should be included in all policies affecting youth employment to avoid perpetuating labour market segregation and discrimination.

Reconstruction and reconciliation and the youth in Angola

Young people, about two thirds of the population of Angola, had been severely affected by the 25 years the country had spent at war. According to Minister Pitra Neto, investing in the capabilities and skills of the youth was critical to reshape and rebuild the nation. A major national programme had been launched in order to strengthen vocational and technical training and develop entrepreneurial spirit. Particular attention was given to reaching out to youth in the country’s vast rural areas, through new rural schools for arts and crafts, itinerant vocational training centres, and training modules that were specially customized to the mentality and the expectations of young people. A new training format had also been introduced to provide “professional literacy” to young adults who lacked basic education but were *de facto* engaged in social and family life or were just out of warfare. Three principles were guiding the action of the Government: to provide training that was relevant to the needs of young people as future workers and future citizens, to ensure quality by means of monitoring the quality of teaching, and to reinforce equal opportunities.

Partnerships between public and private sectors at the local and central levels and coalitions with civil society groups, including youth groups, were a powerful tool to mobilize support and deliver on youth employment. Public-private partnerships between schools, training institutions, universities and enterprises should be forged to better align skills to the world of work and to leverage resources for funding education, training and lifelong learning.

Governments and the social partners were the major players in the development of youth employment policies and programmes. Employers’ and workers’ organizations had real knowledge of the needs of enterprises, workers and the labour markets and should be involved in the design, monitoring and evaluation of youth employment measures. Efforts should be made to encourage young entrepreneurs and workers to join employers’ organizations and trade unions.

The Mexican experience

Young people below 30 in Latin America are not a group, nor a sector; they represent the majority of the population. Among them, according to figures reported by Mr. Manrique, representative of Mexican Employers' Federation (COPARMEX), about 40 per cent began working before the age of 15 while just 4 per cent could go to a university. Among the latter about 12 per cent obtained their degree, and only 17 per cent of them eventually landed a job related to what they had studied. There was much dialogue and action by the social partners in Mexico on those issues. Main initiatives included the establishment of a national Labour Observatory, the introduction of schemes to assess and monitor schools and teachers and to improve the overall quality of education, and dialogue to craft stronger education and regional development policies. COPARMEX not only participated in those tripartite efforts, it also engaged in its own special efforts to redesign the system of tertiary education, to promote a stronger entrepreneurial drive in particular among young women, to provide free online education to members, their employees and their families, and to sustain local development forums and business incubators in about 50 cities throughout the country. The success of those initiatives was stimulating international and regional organizations to promote their replication in other countries in the region.

"I would hope that we would enhance labour laws so that young workers could unionize in a much easier way, without employer discrimination and intimidation. We know that young workers in Canada get about 28 per cent more if they belong to a union. It seems to me this is the way to help them get out of poverty."

Barbara Bryers, Canadian Labour Congress and member of the ILO Governing Body

Finally, the fast pace of globalization required mechanisms to connect countries and actors and facilitate greater coherence among policies at both the national and the international levels. In this context, global and regional networks and forums could provide useful platforms to share knowledge and experience on youth employment policies and programmes. The regular reviews of national programmes carried out under the EU Lisbon Strategy and the ILO Lisbon Forum itself were good examples.

5.

Concluding session

Dr. Dayan Jayatileka said that this Forum had been an experiment and a point of departure for the ILO. The Organisation had sought to broaden its outreach while maintaining its unique tripartism as the nuclear core of its endeavours. He said that current achievements at mainstreaming decent work could not be taken for granted. The idea of decent work for a fair globalization had been continuously sharpened and clarified, and be given the status of a leading and guiding idea.

Mr Daniel Funes de Rioja said on behalf of the Employers' Group that the exchange of views had been very positive. It was good to have different views and to try to confront them, which was the nature of dialogue. The key question was to debate different ideas in good faith—and that had been an extremely valuable result of the discussion. The dialogues, ideas and views that had made up the Forum would be very useful for tripartite discussions at the ILO. It was now the task of its Governing Body and Office to reflect on these. He noted that appropriate policies for employment and decent work depended on the countries and cultures, but there were certainly common values. He reiterated employers' positions on the different themes of the Forum and concluded by saying that: "If economic growth is not feasible without productive employment, employment without sound macroeconomic policies is not sustainable."

Sir Roy Trotman said on behalf of the workers, as well as the NGOs associated with them, that the Forum had produced a high level of discussion which he described as a "distillation of intelligence and vision". The ILO Governing Body would study the report of the meeting and would need to have a number of practical action programmes put in place within a reasonable timeframe. These would have to be directed at national and regional experiences and inter-agency action at the global level. It was important to ensure effective outreach of the main messages of the Forum to a very wide audience. He was pleased to see the engagement of parliamentarians on decent work and the possibility of tripartite dialogue with them in the future. He noted with interest the suggestion that ILO examine the issue of private equity funds and hedge funds. The

need to mobilize the necessary political will for implementation, he concluded, was the main message from the workers' side.

Mr. Juan Somavia said the thematic sessions had produced clear and pragmatic ideas, some of which could already be included in the ILO's future work. He noted that the Forum had revealed strong consensus in favour of decent work for a fair globalization and on the notion that decent work should be at the core of policy coherence, which must begin with fairer policies at the national level. He emphasised the essential role of fostering social justice, entrepreneurship and innovation, and creativity in finding new solutions. If the ILO could bring anything to such complex search for solutions, it was above all due to its working method based on dialogue. Moreover, the Decent Work Agenda could not be advanced with ILO resources alone. He said he was very encouraged that other actors such as parliamentarians and international institutions were taking responsibility to advance the Decent Work Agenda as part of the emerging global movement that institutions represented at the Forum were contributing to foster.

Mr José António Viera Da Silva closed the meeting by expressing his satisfaction with the way the Forum had been carried out and the results that it had achieved. He proposed to the ILO that the Lisbon Forum should constitute a stepping stone for holding other meetings designed to assess the impacts of policies for decent work and perfect the tools for implementation. The experience of the three days, he concluded, provided a strong incentive to organise another forum which would help increase global mobilization for decent work and strengthen political will around this agenda.



APPENDIX

Annex 1

Programme of the Forum

Wednesday, 31 October	
08.00 – 10.00 14.00 – 17.00	Registration
17.00–18.00	<p>Opening plenary session: Juan Somavia, ILO Director-General José Sócrates, Prime Minister of Portugal José António Vieira Da Silva, Minister for Labour and Social Solidarity, Portugal Dayan Jayatilleka, Chairperson, ILO Governing Body Daniel Funes de Rioja, Employer Vice-Chairperson, ILO Governing Body Leroy Trotman, Worker Vice-Chairperson, ILO Governing Body</p>
18.00–19.00	<p>Keynote speaker: Surin Pitsuwan, Secretary-General designate, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)</p>
19.00–21.00	Welcome reception
Thursday, 1 November	
09.00–10.15	<p>Session 1: Employability: Education, skills development and technology <i>Bridging knowledge gaps</i> Chairperson: François Perigot, Honorary President, International Organisation of Employers (IOE) Panel members: Maria João Rodrigues, Special Adviser to the Portuguese Prime Minister for the European Presidency Mark Richmond, Director for the Coordination of United Nations Priorities in Education, UNESCO Phil O'Reilly, CEO, Business New Zealand Jan Eastman, Deputy General Secretary, Education International</p>

	<p>Session 2: Upgrading work and enterprises in the informal economy</p> <p><i>Organizing for voice and participation</i></p> <p><i>Chairperson:</i> Manuel Viage, General Secretary, National Union of Angolan Workers</p> <p><i>Panel members:</i> Yash Tandon, Executive Director, South Centre</p> <p>Charles Gore, Chief, Research and Policy Analysis, Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)</p> <p>Jean-Yves Barcelo, UN-HABITAT</p> <p>Hilda Sánchez, Senior Economist, Inter-American Regional Organization of Workers of the ICFTU (ICFTU-ORIT)</p>
10.15–10.45	Coffee break
10.45–12.00	<p>Session 1 (cont.)</p> <p>Session 2 (cont.)</p>
12.00–12.30	<p>Keynote speaker (plenary)</p> <p>Vladimír Špidla, EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities</p>
12.30–14.00	Lunch (provided at AIP)
14.00–14.30	<p>Keynote speaker (plenary)</p> <p>Mats Karlsson, Vice Chair High-Level Committee on Programs of the UN System Chief Executives' Board for Coordination (CEB) and Country Director, World Bank</p>

<p>14.30–15.45</p>	<p>Session 3: Migration for work, within borders and internationally</p> <p><i>Securing the benefits, diminishing the risks of worker mobility</i></p> <p><i>Chairperson:</i> John Sweeney, President, American Federation of Labour and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL–CIO)</p> <p><i>Panel Members:</i> Giuliano Amato, Minister of the Interior of Italy Mr Jesús Caldera Sánchez Capitán, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs of Spain Caridad T. Sri Tharan, Founding Member and Advisor, Migrant Forum in Asia John Bingham, Head of Policy, International Catholic Migration Commission Jacqueline Mugo, Executive Director, Kenya Federation of Employers</p>
	<p>Session 4: Social protection policies for social cohesion and economic development</p> <p><i>Moving towards a global social floor?</i></p> <p><i>Chairperson:</i> Carlos Tomada, Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Security of Argentina</p> <p><i>Panel members:</i> Aart de Geus, Deputy-Secretary General, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Roberto Bissio, Coordinator, Social Watch and Executive Director, Third World Institute Sudha Pillai, Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment, India Helmut Schwarzer, Social Security Secretary, Ministry of Social Security, Brazil João Proença, General Secretary, General Workers' Union (UGT), Portugal</p>
<p>15.45–16.15</p>	<p>Coffee break</p>
<p>16.15–18.00</p>	<p>Session 3 (cont.) Session 4 (cont.)</p>

Friday, 2 November	
09.00–10.15	<p>Session 5: Policy coherence among international organizations</p> <p><i>Creating the tools to make it work</i></p> <p><i>Chairperson:</i> Sha Zukang, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs</p> <p><i>Panel members:</i> Josep Borrell, President, Committee on Development of the European Parliament, and Chair of the Global Progressive Forum (GPF)</p> <p>Raymond Parsons, member of the Management Committee of Business Unity South Africa (BUSA) and Overall Business Convenor at the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC)</p> <p>Saleh Nsouli, Director, Offices in Europe, International Monetary Fund (IMF)</p> <p>Ricardo Meléndez-Ortiz, Chief Executive, International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD)</p> <p>Zwelinzima Vavi, General Secretary of Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU)</p>

	<p>Session 6: Decent work opportunities for young women and men: Overcoming discrimination and disadvantage</p> <p><i>Equality in diversity: A dream or a necessity?</i></p> <p><i>Chairperson:</i> Ashraf Tabani, President, Employers' Federation of Pakistan</p> <p><i>Panel members:</i> Carlos Lupi, Minister of Labour and Employment of Brazil António D. Pitra Neto, Minister for Public Administration, Employment and Social Security, Angola Gilles de Robien, Ambassador with responsibility for promoting social cohesion, France Barbara Byers, Executive Vice-President, Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) Carvalho da Silva, General Secretary, General Confederation of the Portuguese Workers (GCTP) Ariosto Manrique, President, Youth Commission of the Mexican Employers' Confederation</p>
10.15–10.45	Coffee break
10.45–12.00	Session 5 (cont.) Session 6 (cont.)
12.00–12.30	Keynote speakers (plenary) Abraham Katz, President, International Organisation of Employers (IOE) Guy Ryder, General Secretary, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)
12.30–14.00	Lunch (provided at AIP)
14.00–14.30	Keynote speaker (plenary) Mary Robinson, President, Realizing Rights: The Ethical Globalization Initiative

14.30–15.00	<p>Panel of parliamentarians (plenary)</p> <p><i>Accountability and coherence of public policy for decent work for a fair globalization: The role of parliaments</i></p> <p>Heráclito Fortes, Senator, the Federative Republic of Brazil</p> <p>Sheila Carstairs, Senator, Canada</p> <p>Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, Member of the European Parliament, and President of the Party of European Socialists</p>
15.00–15.30	Coffee break
15.30–17.30	<p>Report-back session and discussion on next steps</p> <p>Closing session:</p> <p><i>Chaired by:</i> José António Vieira Da Silva, Minister for Labour and Social Solidarity, Portugal</p>

Conclusions of the Pre-Forum Meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Lisbon, 31 October 2007

1. Parliaments and their members have key responsibilities in relation to labour, employment and social justice issues. Their participation is essential to achieving decent work for a fair globalization.
2. Parliamentary action is required to ratify international labour instruments and translate them into a national framework. This involves helping to influence and formulate policies aimed at ensuring employment for all in decent working conditions, which in turn requires adapting existing legislative and regulatory frameworks, overseeing government policies, adopting the national budget and scrutinizing the public accounts.
3. Parliaments should strive to ensure coherence between economic and social policies at the national, regional and international levels. In this context, they should assume greater responsibility in international negotiations in order to achieve the goal of consistency and coherence of global economic and social policies. This will also require greater interaction between parliaments and the multilateral institutions.
4. These findings are reflected in greater detail in the report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization. Following up on the recommendations of the report, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) – with the support of parliaments – has taken a number of steps. These include organizing a global parliamentary debate on job creation and employment, adopting a resolution setting out recommendations for parliamentary action and endorsing proposals for the establishment of a joint multi-year programme of cooperation between the ILO and the IPU.
5. The IPU should assist parliaments in moving this agenda forward. It should do so first of all by encouraging parliaments to act on specific issues such as minimum labour standards; decent working conditions and a working environment that is also free of exposure to harmful agents; enhancing employment mobility; migrant workers; “the brain drain”; employment for the young; reform of pension systems; and ending child labour. These issues reflect a vision of more caring societies developing through a fairer globalization.
6. The IPU should also assist parliaments by facilitating their interaction with each other and in particular of their members who are actively working in parliament on the multiple aspects of decent work and fair globalization by helping them to share experiences and best practices. The IPU should also promote parliamentary interaction with the multilateral institutions and inform them of the content of the decent work agenda.

7. The IPU should develop specific tools to facilitate parliamentary action on these issues. Such tools should be developed in cooperation with the ILO, based on the model of the parliamentary handbooks developed in recent years by the IPU. Inspiration for content should be drawn from the toolkit on employment and decent work recently issued by the ILO. The IPU should also facilitate direct contact between interested members of parliament through the use of the IPU website.
8. In order to drive this process forward, the IPU should establish a parliamentary advisory group on employment and decent work. The group should be composed of some 15 members of parliament from the different geopolitical regions who work on labour, employment and social development issues in their respective parliaments. The ILO should be represented in this group. The group should report to the IPU Governing Council on an annual basis.
9. The advisory group should develop and monitor the implementation of proposals for specific IPU activities. These would include facilitating networking between those who work on employment and social development issues, preparing working tools for them and others in parliament, running parliamentary campaigns on specific issues, and organizing regional and global meetings. The advisory group should be tasked with undertaking the study that was recommended by the 116th IPU Assembly on how parliaments address the impact of globalization in their respective countries, including an assessment of the role of parliaments in promoting decent work for all.

Call to Action for Decent Work, Decent Life by the Decent Work Decent Life Campaign (DWDL)

Despite the world economic boom, most of the world's population are not seeing their lives improve as a result.

As well as significant open unemployment, many are underemployed, or not paid for work performed. Half of the world's workforce earns less than 2 \$ a day. 12.3 million women and men work in slavery. 200 million children under the age of 15 work instead of going to school. 2.2 million people die due to work-related accidents and diseases every year. People in developed and developing countries work more for less money, and more and more people – overwhelmingly women – are forced to make their living in the so-called informal economy, without social protection or rights and in precarious jobs. Meanwhile, companies are using the threat of outsourcing to drive down wages and hard fought for rights such as the right to collective bargaining and to strike. Trade unionists that fight these trends are dismissed, threatened, jailed and even killed.

Only an international system based on solidarity and respect for people's rights, as enshrined in United Nations and International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions, can put a stop to these trends. We call on our governments to sign these conventions, to implement them urgently and to put decent work at the heart of their policy-making.

In July 2006, governments at the UN Economic and Social Council adopted a Ministerial Declaration whose first article states: "We are convinced of the urgent need to create an environment at the national and international levels that is conducive to the attainment of full and productive employment and **decent work for all** as a foundation for sustainable development." Their call must be matched by ratification and implementation of the ILO's standards, at the same time as international agencies use the UN's new Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work as a first step towards fostering greater policy coherence and convergence for implementing the promise of Decent Work for All.

The time to start implementing these promises is now.

We believe that decent work is central to eradicating poverty, improving the lives of women and men and enabling people to live in peace and dignity. We hence call on decision-makers urgently to:

1. **Decent work:** Reaffirm the contribution stable and quality jobs make to a healthy economy and just and equal communities by implementing inclusive strategies for full and productive employment, including for those

currently working in the so-called informal economy who need rights and justice to defend their interests. All people have the right to work, to good working conditions and to sufficient income for their basic economic, social and family needs, a right that should be enforced by providing adequate living wages.

2. **Rights:** Workers' rights to form and join trade unions and bargain collectively with their employer are fundamental to realising decent work, and all international organisations, governments and businesses must live up to their responsibilities to respect workers' human rights.
3. **Social protection:** Strengthen and broaden social protection coverage by ensuring access to social security, pensions, unemployment benefits, maternity protection and quality health care to all. These benefits should be available to everyone, including workers in the so-called informal economy.
4. **Trade:** Change unfair trade rules and ensure that trade agreements are used as an instrument for decent work, sustainable development and empowerment of the world's workers, women, the unemployed and the poor. Binding mechanisms for the promotion and enforcement of decent work, including core labour standards, must be included in trade agreements. Governments must stop making trade deals which hurt the poor, create unemployment and lead to exploitation. The demands of workers' organisations and the rest of civil society must be listened to.
5. **Debt:** Ensure that the priorities of the international financial institutions incorporate social and environmental concerns. Particularly, loan and debt conditions which force countries to deregulate labour markets, reduce public spending and privatise public services at the cost of access and quality must be stopped. All projects funded by these institutions must adhere to core labour standards in their implementation.
6. **Aid:** Ensure that governments keep their commitment to increase the level of official development aid of rich countries to at least 0.7% of GDP. Adequate financing for development is imperative if the UN's Millennium Development Goals are to be reached.
7. **Migration:** Ensure that migrant workers are not exploited and enjoy the same rights as other workers by ratifying the relevant ILO Conventions and the 1990 UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.