

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION

SEVENTH AFRICAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE
(Harare, 29 November-7 December 1988)

PROVISIONAL RECORD

NINTH SITTING

Tuesday, 6 December 1988, 9.45 a.m.

Presidents: Mr. Nkomo, Mr. Vanié-Bi-TraREPORT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE:
SUBMISSION AND NOTING

The PRESIDENT - We shall now resume business and the first item on our agenda this morning is the report of the Credentials Committee. I give the floor to Mr. Yoma Golom, Government delegate, Chad, and Chairman of the Committee, for the submission of his report.

Interpretation from French: Mr. YOMA GOLOM (Government delegate, Chad; Chairman of the Credentials Committee) - I am honoured to present to the Conference the first report of the Credentials Committee. This report deals with the composition of the Conference on 3 December 1988. Since the adoption of the report by the Committee, the Republic of Zaire has sent a Government delegation to the Conference raising to 41 the number of delegations here. The total number of accredited delegates and technical advisers is thus slightly over 250, reflecting the great interest in the items on the agenda of the Seventh African Regional Conference of the ILO. Among the 50 member States invited to participate in this Conference, 41 are represented, five declined the invitation and the four remaining member States sent no credentials.

Although in most cases the delegations are complete, the Committee noted with regret that five governments sent only Government representatives, one government appointed a Workers' delegate without appointing an Employers' delegate, and another government sent an Employers' delegate without appointing a Workers' delegate. The Committee also noted that the number of incomplete delegations was even higher, based on the number of delegates who actually registered at the Conference.

The report mentions two communications received by the Committee which concern incomplete delegations and the non-payment of travel and subsistence expenses. In this connection, I would like to point out that this is the first

Conference held since the Rules concerning the Powers, Functions and Procedure of Regional Conferences Convened by the ILO were adopted; these Rules specifically state that the acceptance by a State or territory to be represented at a regional conference implies that it will assume responsibility for the travel and subsistence expenses of its tripartite delegation (article 1(3), amended in 1987). While emphasising that the Committee is not responsible for the implementation of this new rule, and that it does not have the means to verify the substance of the above-mentioned communications, the Committee mentions this matter in its report in the hope of contributing in the future to a better co-operation from all governments and the fulfilment of their obligations so that complete tripartite delegations will participate in future regional conferences of our Organisation.

In addition to this communication, the secretariat of the Conference also received late last night by telefax communications from the Democratic Confederation of Labour and the General Confederation of Labour of Morocco, received in Geneva on 2 December 1988. The Credentials Committee held a special meeting to examine the nature and admissibility of these communications, which protest against the procedure used to appoint delegations of workers to ILO Conferences in general. One of these communications referred more specifically to the Seventh African Regional Conference of the ILO. The Credentials Committee noted that this communication was received by the secretariat of the Conference at Harare after the deadline of 72 hours following the publication of the list of delegations in Harare. Consequently, it is inadmissible under article 10(4)(a) of the Rules concerning the Powers, Functions and Procedure of Regional Conferences Convened by the ILO. To refresh your memory, may I just read article 10(4)(a): "An objection shall not be receivable (...) if the objection is not lodged with the secretariat of the Conference within seventy-two hours from 10 o'clock a.m. of the date of publication of the name and function of the person to whose nomination objection is taken."

This decision was taken unanimously and definitively, in accordance with article 10(5) of the said Rules; consequently, the Conference is called upon only to take note of this without discussion, and of the report.

In conclusion, I would like to offer our sincere thanks to the Employer member from Nigeria, Mr. Okogwu, the Worker member from Cameroon, Mr. Fouda Sima, Mr. Maupain, Mrs. Doumbia-Henry and Mrs. Gibson, for their constant assistance and meticulous care in the preparation of our report.

The PRESIDENT - I thank Mr. Yoma Golom for the work accomplished by his Committee and for his presentation. But, as he stated, the report does not call for decision or discussion. The Conference is merely required to note it. However, I would like the Clerk of the Conference to read out a letter I have received from Mr. Mayila, Minister attending the Conference, Gabon.

Interpretation from French: The CLERK OF THE CONFERENCE - The letter reads as follows:

In studying the report of the Credentials Committee this morning, I noted that it refers to a telex sent by the Secretary-General of the Trade Union Confederation of Gabon, Mr. Martin Allini.

According to this telex, Mr. Allini was not able to attend the present Conference because the State of Gabon did not pay his travel and subsistence expenses.

What I would like to say, Mr. President, without engaging in any controversy, is that each year the State puts at the disposal of the COSYGA a budget in which all the expenses relating to missions and conferences are well specified and Mr. Allini is the organiser of that budget.

As far as this present Conference is concerned, all the mission orders were prepared by myself, including that of Mr. Allini, who was already in Geneva. It was, therefore, up to him to draw on the budget which he manages for his travel and subsistence expenses in Harare.

The Minister of Economy and Finance was surprised to see that he was being asked to pay twice for the same expenses.

I would be most grateful if you would transmit to the Chairman of the Credentials Committee the present clarification of the Government of Gabon.

(The report is noted.)

FOURTH REPORT OF THE SELECTION COMMITTEE:
SUBMISSION AND ADOPTION

The PRESIDENT - I shall now call upon the Chairman of the Selection Committee, Mr. Ndoye, Government delegate, Senegal, to come to the rostrum and submit the report and the resolutions submitted under article 13 of the Rules.

Interpretation from French: Mr. NDOYE (Government delegate, Senegal; Chairman of the Selection Committee) - On behalf of the Selection Committee I have the honour to submit to you the report concerning the resolution submitted in accordance with article 13 of the Rules concerning the Powers, Functions and Procedure of Regional Conferences. The Selection Committee had before it 12 resolutions presented to the Conference in accordance with article 13 of the Rules concerning Powers, Functions and Procedure of Regional Conferences Convened by the International Labour Organisation.

In order to examine these resolutions, the Committee appointed a Working Party which was composed as follows:

Government members:

Egypt: Mrs. Waly
Guinea-Bissau: Mr. Gomes
Malawi: Mr. Kunje
Nigeria: Mr. Fasanya

Employer members:

Mr. Johnston (Zimbabwe)
Mr. Mustafa (Sudan)
Mr. Nyirongo (Zambia)
Mr. Rey (Mauritius)

Workers' members:

Mr. Cunniah (Mauritius)
Mr. Mabumo (Mozambique)
Mr. Mashasi (United Republic of Tanzania)
Mr. Melaku Wirtu (Ethiopia).

The Working Party was chaired by myself, and the Vice-Chairmen were Mr. Rey (Employer member, Mauritius) and Mr. Mashasi (Worker member, United Republic of Tanzania).

The Working Party initially had before it 12 resolutions. At its first meeting, three resolutions concerning apartheid and southern Africa presented by the Workers' group were merged by their sponsors into a single text entitled "resolution concerning southern Africa and apartheid". Three other resolutions concerning the economic situation and employment in Africa, also presented by the Workers' group, were also merged by their sponsors into a single text, entitled "resolution concerning economic development and social progress in Africa". These two resolutions have been adopted by the Working Party with some amendments. The resolution concerning the promotion of women workers' activities within the ILO Plan of Action was also adopted, with one slight amendment, and the resolution concerning protection of the working and general environment in the African region was adopted without amendment.

At its second meeting the Working Party had before it a text merged by the authors of the three other resolutions concerning the same subject, that is to say human rights and fundamental freedoms. Two of these texts had been submitted by the Workers' group and one by the Employers' group. This single text, entitled "resolution concerning respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms", was adopted by the Working Party after some minor amendments. Finally, a resolution concerning the financing of delegations to the International Labour Conference, submitted by the Employers' group, was redrafted by its sponsors. During the discussion concerning this resolution, the proposed text was amended to take into account at the same time the efforts made by both the Governing Body and the Director-General of the ILO and practical contingencies.

The revised texts of these resolutions, as approved by the Working Party, have all been unanimously adopted and they are submitted herewith to the Conference for adoption.

I should like at the end of this submission to thank Mr. Mashasi, the Worker Vice-Chairman of the Working Party, Mr. Rey, the Employer Vice-Chairman, and in fact all members of the Working Party, for their co-operation and the spirit of conciliation which they showed and which made it possible for the Working Party of the Selection Committee to accomplish its task in record time.

I should also like to take this opportunity to thank all the Secretariat of the ILO and the interpreters for their excellent work.

In the name of the Selection Committee, I propose unanimous adoption of the report and resolutions before you.

The PRESIDENT - I now give the floor to Mr. Rey, Employers' delegate, Mauritius, Vice-Chairman of the Working Party of the Selection Committee.

Mr. REY (Employers' delegate, Mauritius; Vice-Chairman of the Working Party of the Selection Committee) - This is the first time I am taking the floor in this august assembly. Allow me to congratulate you on your election as President of the Seventh African Regional Conference. There is no doubt that under your able guidance the Conference has already progressed considerably and that it will come to a very satisfactory conclusion tomorrow.

I wish also to express my sincere appreciation to Zimbabwe, its Government, employers, workers and people for the warm hospitality extended to all participants.

As the Chairman of the Selection Committee has just mentioned, we succeeded in reducing the original 12 resolutions to six, each one concerning a particular subject.

The first resolution concerns southern Africa and apartheid. The indignation of all participants at the continuation of such an inhuman regime has been voiced in the strongest terms in the resolution, and the Governing Body of the ILO has been invited to take all the necessary measures including technical assistance in order to contribute effectively to the eradication of apartheid. Economic insecurity, the external debt problem, the unemployment problem - all these obstacles to economic development and social progress in Africa form the subject of the second resolution, which calls on the ILO to intensify its action in those fields. The promotion of women workers' activities is being urged in the third resolution. The ILO and its African member States are requested to implement programmes on equal opportunity and treatment of men and women and to protect women in the informal sector. The fourth resolution concerns the protection of the working and general environment in the African region. The health and safety of all workers, particularly as regards the use of chemicals and the dumping of highly hazardous and toxic wastes in African countries, are the areas which require action in Africa. Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in Africa is covered by the fifth resolution. This is a subject which is of deep concern to the ILO. Tripartism is the foundation of the ILO and on numerous occasions it has intervened in its favour in many parts of the world. Finally, the sixth resolution deals with the financing of delegations to the International Labour Conference. This is a matter which is of concern to employers and workers alike and we trust that the Governing Body will give its urgent attention to that important matter so as to find a satisfactory solution.

I could not end my intervention without paying tribute to the Committee's Chairman, Mr. Ndoye, Government member of Senegal. Under his wise and able guidance we have been able to achieve a very satisfactory result and the credit all goes to him. I also congratulate Mr. Mashasi, Worker member of the United Republic of Tanzania and my fellow Vice-Chairman, on his remarkable contribution to the success of our Committee's work. A word of thanks goes to the ILO Secretariat and particularly the Legal Adviser who have been of great assistance to the Committee in its deliberations. I have therefore the greatest pleasure on behalf of the Employers' group in recommending the adoption of the report and resolutions.

Mr. MASHASI (Workers' delegate, United Republic of Tanzania; Vice-Chairman of the Working Party of the Selection Committee) - The report presenting the six resolutions is the fruit of concerted work and the good chairmanship of Mr. Ndoye, following consultations with the Employers' and Workers' groups of the Working Party of the Selection Committee.

The resolution on South Africa and apartheid resulted from the merger of resolutions presented by two groups. This Conference, meeting in a front-line State which is one of the targets of the apartheid regime of South Africa, has heard almost every person discussing the Director-General's Report express abhorrence of the regime and its policy of apartheid. We have now appropriately come out with a resolution concerning this evil of apartheid in South Africa.

In Harare early this year, the Tripartite Conference on Action against Apartheid laid the groundwork for an updated Declaration concerning Action against Apartheid in South Africa and Namibia, and a Programme of Action against Apartheid. It is fitting that from this very place at this time the South African regime should hear what the tripartite delegations of Africa say and intend to do to abolish apartheid in South Africa and restore the freedom of Namibia.

Economic development and social progress in Africa are crucial items on our agenda. The ILO plays an important role in this respect. Many issues that have been examined at this Conference hinge on this question. We consider it important that the Conference adopt a general resolution to steer the course of development.

The importance of promoting women workers' activities within the ILO Plan of Action cannot be overemphasised. This matter has the support of so many members of this Conference that it would be inappropriate to have no resolution acknowledging the sentiments that have been expressed so often during the discussion of the Report of the Director-General.

At a time when our continent is under assault by the industrialised countries, whose multinational enterprises are dumping toxic wastes in our continent and threatening the health and lives of our people, a meeting of the International Labour Organisation taking place in Africa could not end without an expression of concern about this disastrous development.

Human rights and fundamental freedoms constitute the basis of the ILO. The extent to which they are violated in Africa has led this Conference to concern itself with this problem. Hence, the resolution.

Finally, the Seventh African Regional Conference is duty-bound to activate a resolution of the Sixth African Regional Conference that has not been implemented, and whose significance is perhaps more valid than it was five years ago. I am speaking of the resolution concerning the financing of delegations to the International Labour Conference.

On behalf of the Workers' group I wish to express our appreciation and satisfaction regarding the report and resolutions. I urge you to adopt them.

The PRESIDENT - Are there no objections to the report? If there are no objections, the report is adopted.

(The report is adopted.)

Resolution concerning southern Africa and apartheid

The PRESIDENT - We shall now examine the resolutions one by one. The first is the resolution concerning southern Africa and apartheid. If there are no objections, I take it that the resolution is adopted.

(The resolution is adopted.)

Resolution concerning economic development and
social progress in Africa

The PRESIDENT - I now put for adoption the resolution concerning economic development and social progress in Africa. Are there any objections? If not, the resolution is adopted.

(The resolution is adopted.)

Resolution concerning the promotion of
women workers' activities within the
ILO Plan of Action

The PRESIDENT - The next resolution is the resolution concerning the promotion of women workers' activities within the ILO Plan of Action. May I consider it adopted?

(The resolution is adopted.)

Resolution concerning the protection of the
working and general environment in
the African region

The PRESIDENT - Next comes the resolution concerning the protection of the working environment in the African region. May I take it that it is adopted?

(The resolution is adopted.)

Resolution concerning respect for human rights
and fundamental freedoms

The PRESIDENT - Next we turn to the resolution concerning respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Are there any speakers? If not, I take it that the resolution is adopted.

(The resolution is adopted.)

Resolution concerning the financing of delegations
to the International Labour Conference

The PRESIDENT - The last resolution is the resolution concerning the financing of delegations to the International Labour Conference. May I take it that it is adopted?

(The resolution is adopted)

COMMUNICATION FROM MR. YAHAYA, SECRETARY FOR MOBILISATION AND
SOCIAL WELFARE, GHANA; CHAIRMAN OF THE GOVERNMENT GROUP

The PRESIDENT - I give the floor to Mr. Yahaya, Secretary for Mobilisation and Social Welfare, Ghana, Chairman of the Government group, to make a communication to the Conference.

Mr. YAHAYA (Secretary for Mobilisation and Social Welfare, Ghana; Chairman of the Government group) - In the meeting of the Government group this morning we discussed the ratification of the Instrument for the Amendment of the ILO Constitution and the African Regional Protocol. At the request of my fellow delegates and with your permission, it may be of interest to summarise and clarify this issue for the benefit of all those now present. On the basis of article 36 of the ILO Constitution, the ratification of the Instrument of Amendment of 1986 has to be deposited in the appropriate form with the Director-General of the ILO in Geneva for the purpose of registration. In accordance with the relevant paragraph of the African Protocol for the distribution of government seats in the Governing Body allocated to the African region, which we discussed this morning, this Protocol must be ratified by three-quarters of the member States of the region to come into force, and ratifications must be communicated to the Secretariat of the OAU which will then proceed to transmit them to the Director-General of the ILO. I think it is important to emphasise again this basic distinction between the two issues, that is the ratification of the Instrument for the Amendment of the Constitution and that of the African Protocol. The former goes direct to Geneva and the latter direct to the OAU Secretariat. I have just been informed by Mr. Maupain that the Director-General of the ILO also intends to address a new communication on the subject to all member States.

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL: DISCUSSION (concl.)

The PRESIDENT - We shall now go back to the debate on the Director-General's Report.

Mr. REAL MAZULA (Government delegate, Mozambique) - First of all I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your unanimous election to chair this meeting. It is also my duty to thank the Zimbabwean Government for their warm reception and for all the facilities extended to my delegation. We do feel at home in Harare.

This Seventh African Regional Conference of the ILO contains on its agenda items of great relevance for our continent and there is a need for all of us to give these items our profound reflection.

The Report of the Director-General covers recent developments in South Africa and Namibia in the social and labour sphere. Generally, this agenda item focuses on countries of southern Africa and on my country in particular.

As I stated in my last address to the 75th Session of the International Labour Conference, the situation in my country today is characterised by an economic boycott and by military aggression directed against economic objectives and against our population. As a direct consequence of this phenomenon, more than 100,000 Mozambicans have lost their lives; there are about 4.5 million displaced people in a miserable situation; the damage caused by South African economic boycotts and military aggression against my country, through the armed bandits, amounts to US\$6,000 million, which is double our foreign debt. However, my country is doing all it can to maintain peace in the region through good neighbourliness.

To a greater or lesser extent, people are suffering from the pernicious effects of the apartheid policy in other countries in the region. For that reason, we have followed with great interest the evolution of the talks between Angola, Cuba, South Africa and the United States to try and reach a global solution of peace in South West Africa. We express our wish that the next meeting in Brazzaville will define concrete machinery for the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 435 on Namibia, as well as call for an end to military operations in Angola.

We are therefore convinced that the end of the grave and complex problems affecting southern Africa will only be possible once the apartheid system in South Africa has been totally dismantled. And this will only be achieved with the active and effective support of all African countries.

The Report of the Director-General refers to technical co-operation and I would like to make some comments on this. The International Labour Organisation, with the support of donor countries and institutions present at this Conference, has developed various technical co-operation activities in various African countries, which contribute greatly to the economic and social development of our continent.

Taking the case of Mozambique, I would like to refer specifically to the projects carried out to assist migrant workers, whether they take the form of investigations and publications or the form of projects to absorb repatriated miners. The technical co-operation between Mozambique and the ILO has resulted in useful and concrete activities.

As regards working women in Africa, I could say that the situation in my country is not different from the parameters defined in the Report of the Director-General - even though our society has some specific characteristics. As our late President, Samora Machel, used to say: "the liberation of women is a necessity of the revolution, a guarantee of its continuity and a prerequisite for its triumph". It is in the context of this philosophy that our Constitution establishes that: "the emancipation of women constitutes one of the essential tasks of the State" and "in the People's Republic of Mozambique, a woman is equal to a man in rights and duties". This equality extends to political, economic and cultural fields. However, various factors such as the conditions of emigration of workers to South African mines, the great burden of traditional education and illiteracy, the consequences of war and underdevelopment, have all had a negative impact on women's full integration into the world labour market. Nevertheless, since independence and up to the present time, a great number of women have had access to important positions of leadership and management, even at ministerial level. In addition, they can exercise any profession for which they have the required skills in any sector of activity in the country.

The other important item of the Conference is rural and urban training and its linkage with the employment problem. I will take this opportunity to highlight the Mozambican experience in this respect.

The difficult economic situation faced by my country - due to the international economic recession and the externally imposed war, alongside the lack of industrial input and specialised labour force - has led to a degradation of production and productivity; this had led to widespread unemployment and underemployment.

The Programme of Economic Rehabilitation has adopted certain measures to raise production and productivity, adjusting the labour force to real capacities and the needs of productive sectors. In our country, we have a redundant labour force which needs to be moved to productive sectors. This excessive labour force is caused by the migratory flow of people from rural to urban areas, principally due to armed bandits who destroy our economic infrastructures in the rural areas. We need to take the necessary urgent measures to integrate this population into the process of socio-economic development of our country.

In this context, my Government decided to create a body to solve the problem of employment in a permanent and systematic basis. Its role is to promote the creation of productive employment through inquiries on new sources of employment, identify and encourage individual and collective initiatives to occupy the labour force, stimulate the creation of new working posts by analysing productive processes and to bring them in line with the respective labour force, as well as to conduct studies on economic availability. This job-creation structure was created in October 1987 within the Ministry of Labour.

In order to be able to carry out the above-mentioned activities, the Department of Employment Promotion, under the Ministry of Labour, must try to seek foreign and international financial donors who will support initiatives and projects to absorb the redundant labour force, demobilised from military service, and other unemployed groups. It is evident that the Ministry of Labour has the support and collaboration of both the workers' and employers' organisations as well as other institutions and entities in the country in this endeavour.

My Government is paying particular attention to the problem of adequate employment of the labour force in the process of national development in order to establish a plan of employment. Recent experience has shown the need for funds to procure productivity instruments and funding for employment-creation initiatives.

Finally, allow me to say something about the co-operatives. The process of production in rural areas in my country has passed through various phases. The rural area producer has learnt, through experience, that the quality and volume of labour and production is improved by involving voluntary associated members.

Recent and various studies have proved that a co-operative constituted without any set objectives is doomed to failure.

It is vital that, when co-operatives are set up, their members come together on a voluntary basis and acknowledge the need to boost the degree of production which characterises the process of collective production.

Any co-operative association must encourage its members to contribute towards the development of the co-operative and to better the working conditions of its members.

Co-operatives should extend to all productive processes and the organisation of producers in co-operatives must be based on the respect of the principle of freedom of association.

We also believe that an exchange of experience amongst our countries will enable us to find a correct way to meet the objectives of the co-operative movement which is more adequate to African reality.

Interpretation from French: Mr. ROBEL (representative of the World Confederation of Labour) - The World Confederation of Labour welcomes the holding of this Conference in Zimbabwe, a country which has always been in the forefront of the struggle against colonialism and racism, and has always worked to promote the social, economic, cultural, spiritual and political dimensions of the African people.

The generous hospitality of the Government, the friendliness of the people, the fraternity which has been demonstrated to us by the workers and trade union leaders of Zimbabwe, have greatly contributed to the success of this Conference, complementing the excellent documentation provided by the ILO and the skilful direction of the President, whom we congratulate warmly.

The WCL, an international union organisation which brings together the organisations of workers and peasants of the developing countries, in particular, is very sensitive to matters involving human rights, freedom, equality and problems of economic and social development, particularly in Africa. Africa, without a doubt, is the continent which suffers most from violations of human rights. I refer specifically to the barbarous policy of apartheid in South Africa.

That regime continues and intensifies its brutalities, arbitrary arrests, ill-treatment and torture of prisoners, banishment, the exploitation of Black men and executions, the most recent of which demonstrate that South Africa is not ready to abandon its retrograde, racist and colonialist laws and attitudes.

International conventions on basic human rights, equality of opportunity and treatment, freedom of association and collective bargaining are not applied in that country.

The Report of the Director-General concerning trade unions describes clearly the brutal repression directed against trade union leaders who struggle for justice, freedom and the development of a Black democracy.

The WCL would like to pay tribute to all Black South African militants, to all the front-line States and to all liberation movements which struggle and suffer for a just cause. They can count on our solidarity; the WCL and its affiliate organisations have always come forward with their aid and support, not only through messages of protest and indignation against the state of emergency, the arrest and execution of trade union and political leaders, and through campaigns to raise awareness, but also through boycotts and our assistance to Black trade unionists in the area of education.

It is fitting that we should discuss policies, measures and resources which can be deployed to eliminate apartheid.

Certainly, in the United Nations and in the ILO, resolutions, statements and programmes have been adopted concerning action against apartheid in South Africa and Namibia, but their effects are still modest. The reason is that those who could be decisive in bringing down the Pretoria regime, thanks to their economic, financial, political and military force, wish to safeguard their interests, even though they claim to oppose apartheid.

The battle against apartheid is a universal responsibility of all countries, be they wealthy or developing; those of the African continent, in particular, have a special role to play.

The WCL affirms that any form of action taken against the apartheid regime will be inefficient without the active co-operation of all countries. We hope that the resolutions of this Conference on the situation in southern Africa in general, and in South Africa and Namibia in particular, will be applied fully.

We congratulate the ILO for the technical assistance it provides through training and educational activities, and we urge the Organisation to expand its projects so that the workers and the Black people can fully assume their role.

We support fully the demand for the unconditional release of Nelson Mandela and all trade union and political prisoners, and we ask the international community to strengthen its sanctions until apartheid is finally eradicated.

The preceding remarks concern South Africa, but the adoption of a resolution concerning respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms would make it clear that the attention of African States Members of this Organisation is being drawn to the absolute necessity of ensuring the respect of trade union and civil rights. whose corollary is democratisation, the harmonisation of national life and the real participation of workers, without which economic development, social justice and peace cannot be achieved.

The serious economic and social crisis in Africa has not come about by chance. It is the result of inappropriate inherited economic and social policies and structures which African countries have yet to shed. It is the predominance of the interests of the higher levels of society and the privileged classes, to the detriment of the rural poor and urban disenfranchised. It is a lack of support for rural and agricultural production. It is a whole set of errors in tax and price policies, unproductive investments, prestige projects, expenditure on armaments, and so on and so forth. And it is particularly the absence of the democratic participation of workers and their organisations in the design, choice, implementation and monitoring of development plans.

To all these evils we have to add the effects of natural catastrophes, the effects of the world economic recession, aggravated by an imbalance in economic, commercial, financial and monetary relations between the richer and the poorer countries. And, of course, there is the burden of external debt.

The external debt is a very serious problem. It is an obstacle to the social and economic development of the Third World countries. It is the very sword of Damocles which hangs over the democratisation process in many countries. In April 1987, the WCL met in Washington with the heads of the IMF and the World Bank, to draw their attention to the effect of indebtedness upon the developing countries and to offer some solutions.

The WCL repeats that it is not possible to repay the foreign debt. The debt is a real political problem; it was contracted illegally in many cases, and now entails morally and economically unreasonable terms. Furthermore, these terms cannot be met.

A solution could be found in the holding, as quickly as possible, of a conference at the very highest political level, where the indebted countries should adopt a common policy.

It would only be right and proper to wipe the slate clean for the poorer countries, which are now becoming suppliers of capital to the rich countries. The institution of a new international economic order is more necessary than ever, particularly as regards the review of prices for commodities produced in Africa.

Turning to the issue of women's work in Africa, the Director-General has offered us a very good analysis which we fully support.

The WCL and its affiliate organisations have sponsored a number of international and regional meetings, several of which in Africa, on the problems affecting women. Their participation and their complete integration in trade union activities have been emphasised. It must be recognised that women are subject to much injustice, compounded by the present socio-economic crisis. It is therefore important for many countries to redefine the status of women and ensure their complete emancipation.

The status which is given to women in general is such that they cannot achieve emancipation or an equal footing with men. However, their participation and contributions to the process of social, economic and political development are indispensable for success. Our countries should therefore define measures to remove the obstacles faced by women, and allocate substantial national development resources to promote education, vocational and technical training for women, access to jobs, recycling, land, credit, agricultural techniques, etc.

The hopes raised by the United Nations Decade for Women must be fulfilled.

Concerning rural and urban training, I would like to stress the needs of the great majority of populations, which have not always been at the centre of government concerns.

The objective of training should not be to turn out often unproductive elites, but to reach the greatest number of persons to enable them to exercise a socially productive activity which ensures a decent income, and thereby contribute to solving the problem of unemployment and economic and social development.

As the Director-General says in his Report, it is up to each country to decide whether and how to redesign its training system. The situation in a number of countries where many young graduates cannot find a job, where the craft industry is little developed, where poverty spreads throughout rural areas and the peripheral urban areas, must lead us all to think very seriously about redesigning education and training in response to these realities.

This Conference is also called upon to discuss co-operatives, or popular organisations. Each country has followed its own path, in the light of its economic and social development goals. Some countries believe in centrally planned economies, others in free enterprise. In both cases, the results have been disappointing. In the former, there is a lack of supplies and stagnation in the standard of living. In the latter, in spite of investments and the apparent wealth of a minority, most people live in poverty, and the economy goes from boom to bust, in typical fashion of the free enterprise system.

In these conditions, co-operative enterprises could be one of the ways forward for the developing countries. It is regrettable that in African countries the co-operative movement has been hampered by the interference by political authorities, a lack of training and the failure to apply the basic rules which should guide all co-operative associations.

We would like to stress that no co-operative can survive if it is not based upon the will of its members. The trade unions can help here by providing economic and social services, particularly for workers and peasants, even where they start as pre-cooperative associations.

Our organisation has attempted to promote local initiatives in the developing countries which reflect the aspirations and needs of the workers and peasants. Experience shows that this community action can ensure the responsible participation of the population in national economic and social development.

The work of the Conference is about to end. We hope that its conclusions will be followed up by positive action, enabling Africa to emerge from the crisis in which it finds itself, with the increased aid of international technical co-operation, where the ILO has a fundamental part to play.

Mr. TARBAH (Workers' delegate, Liberia) - It is for me a pleasure to stand before you this morning to bring greetings from the Workers of the Republic of Liberia.

As you are aware, this is the first time that a Workers' delegate from the Second Republic of Liberia has addressed you.

We should like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to the presidency of this Conference. There is no need to emphasise your qualities of leadership, which have been clear from the beginning of our deliberations.

Turning to the issue of South Africa, we should like to say that our rural workers are steadfast in their solidarity with their brothers in South Africa.

The authorities in South Africa are being subjected to pressure from countries throughout the world and one day they will have to bend to this pressure. Much has been said on this matter in the Report of the Director-General; we should merely like to say that we endorse what has been said and we thank him for giving his undivided attention to this problem.

As regards women's participation in the Second Republic of Liberia, trade unions are encouraging women's participation. Women are actively involved in trade union activities and attend workshops and seminars, both at home and abroad.

There can be no denying that Liberia is a peaceful country in the world. There is no evidence to prove that trade union leaders have been imprisoned or denounced by informers. Indeed, our presence here is a clear indication of our Government's commitment to workers' representation within the ILO.

We are pleased to inform you this morning that, during the course of this year, the ILO sent a representative from the ILO to Liberia; on this occasion, he approved the trade union activities in our country.

We should now like to refer to co-operatives. We have appealed to the ILO to sponsor our co-operative activities, in the interests of its members and the country as a whole.

At this juncture, we should like to thank you and your able staff, and all who have listened to us.

But we leave you one message. If we want to be united, we should do away with segregation, undermining, backbiting, gossiping - whether we be White or Black - so long as we are Members of the ILO.

Mrs. SEPEREPERE (representative of the Women's International Democratic Federation) - I have the pleasure to convey, on behalf of my organisation, the Women's International Democratic Federation, cordial greetings to the participants at the Seventh African Regional Conference of the International Labour Organisation and to express deep appreciation for the invitation extended to us. I would also like to express our thanks and gratitude to the Government, the Party and the people of Zimbabwe for their great hospitality and for providing the excellent conditions under which we are working. We wish the Conference fruitful deliberations and a successful outcome.

The WIDF attaches great importance to the tremendous efforts of the ILO in continuing to highlight the situation of the people and in particular the women of Africa and those in southern Africa, who continue to suffer under the abominable apartheid regime. This Conference is taking place at the most appropriate time, when the situation in South Africa is deteriorating by the day. Repression and the flow of blood is still the order of the day in that country. The recent municipal election, embracing all racial groups, must be seen in the context of the intensification of repression and the entrenchment of White supremacy. However, three years of the state of emergency rule, accompanied by military and police terror and assault on the little that remained of civil liberties, have dismally failed to crush the morale and fighting spirit of the people.

It is only through internal and external pressure that the racist minority regime can be forced to abandon apartheid, grant Namibia independence under the relevant United Nations Security Council Resolution 435 and halt its aggression against the front-line States. External pressure, through the imposition of comprehensive mandatory sanctions against South Africa, remains the only peaceful way the international community can help complement the struggle waged by the oppressed people and democratic forces in South Africa to end apartheid. The stay of execution of the Sharpeville Six is a glaring example of how international pressure can force dictatorships and fascist regimes to act contrary to their wishes and intentions. Needless to say, there is a need to increase our solidarity with the women and people of southern Africa to help them withstand the regime's tyranny.

The WIDF, in keeping with its tradition of rendering unqualified solidarity to the women engaged in the struggle for national independence, justice and social progress, early in 1987 organised an international conference on solidarity with the women and people of southern Africa in London. The purpose of the conference was to mobilise support for the front-line States, so that they can withstand South Africa's retaliatory action in the event of the imposition of sanctions. Concrete action followed. In June 1987, at the World Congress of Women in Moscow, the WIDF launched a campaign to support the Africa Fund, launched at the Eighth Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, held here in Harare in 1986. The WIDF campaign, under the motto "Add another nail to the apartheid coffin", will go on until the end of this year. In another act of solidarity, a tour of nine European countries by the SWAPO Women's Council has been planned by the WIDF and its national organisations in these countries.

Looking at the Director-General's comprehensive Report, we feel gratified at the considerable attention focused on the situation of African women. Problems facing our African sisters have been identified and their solutions elaborated in many plans and strategies of the Organisation of African Unity. The Arusha Strategies for the Advancement of Women and the Lagos Plan of Action are examples. The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women have been adopted and ratified by many African governments, in order to solve problems affecting the status of women.

However, complete implementation of these plans and strategies continues to be frustrated by the socio-economic crisis the region is grappling with. The poverty of Africa is becoming more acute by the day and the greater part of its consequences is carried by women. Are successive droughts and natural disasters the main causes of Africa's poverty? Certainly not. Africa and other developing countries are exposed to the most wicked and vicious methods to bring them into economic and subsequently political dependence. The problem of foreign debts is an unprecedented painful experience for the governments of the region. Giving loans to these countries has become a lucrative business for Western financial institutions and an instrument for plundering the States concerned. Therefore, the cancellation of the foreign debt and the restructuring of international relations on a just and equitable basis, in short, the establishment of a new international economic order, will be a major step out of the crisis.

As if the problems heaped on Africa are not enough, now the Western industrialised countries are trying to turn this continent into their poisonous rubbish bin. No matter how poor Africa is, there is no justification for allowing the dumping of toxic waste in her oceans. Our African sisters must raise their voices against this wanton destruction of life and the environment.

The WIDF appreciates recognition by the ILO and the African governments of the vital role women of Africa play and will continue to play in the development of their countries and the need for their training. However, we cannot sincerely speak of women's training and integration in the development process, let alone their equality with men, while they remain illiterate or semi-literate. The fact that 70 per cent of the women live in the rural areas as producers of food, means that they are the most disadvantaged section of the population. The rural women are illiterate, poor and live under the most inhuman conditions. They have to walk long distances to fetch firewood and water, which most of the time is not even clean. They have no child-care centres, electricity or adequate health centres. Therefore, the education and training of women in the rural areas will be an asset to countries of the region. Their upliftment will make a great contribution to the development of the rural areas. This will increase agricultural production, and thus contribute significantly to Africa's economic recovery and alleviate the workload on women. Development of the rural areas will also halt the exodus of the rural masses to the towns and cities, and thus minimise the crime rate.

We hope that 1990 (the United Nations International Year of Literacy) will give the African governments, despite their manifold problems, the opportunity to seriously focus attention on the plight of illiterates, the majority of whom are women.

May we, at this juncture, express our deep appreciation for the work which the ILO is doing among our African sisters, in particular, women in the liberation movements. We are confident that the ILO will continue to give vocational and technical training to women in the southern African liberation movements, in order to prepare them, so that they can play a meaningful role in the reconstruction of their countries.

In conclusion, we are confident that the outcome of this Conference will make a tremendous impact in changing the situation of African women and solving Africa's economic problems.

Interpretation from French: Mr. KPENOU (Employers' delegate, Benin) - Mr. President, I would like to join those distinguished speakers who have preceded me on this rostrum in congratulating you on the occasion of your brilliant election to high office in this Conference. My warm congratulations also to all the distinguished officers of this Conference.

The Director-General's Report, whose clarity, precision and depth of information we welcome, requires that we thank him and all his colleagues.

We also appreciated the meticulous and methodical use which the ILO has made of the great amount of information which all Members of the ILO - that is to say governments, employers, workers and non-governmental organisations - provide to the ILO. This is encouraging to us and motivates our continued collaboration.

Before I continue, may I, in the name of the National Organisation of Employers of Benin, pay tribute to the late Elimane Kane, Deputy Director-General of the ILO, whom I met 23 years ago in his capacity as Workers' delegate of Mauritania, and with whom I remained on warm, friendly terms.

The People's Republic of Benin was one of the last countries which he visited on mission before his tragic death; as usual, he had visited the National Union of Workers of Benin, the UNSTB, and the National Organisation of Employers of Benin, the ONEB.

Therefore, in the name of my organisation, I wish once again to express to the Director-General of the ILO, his colleagues and family of this distinguished man my very sincere condolences.

My organisation has read the Director-General's Report very carefully; we fully support it and believe that we can derive useful information from it in order to strengthen our activities with the central authorities of our country in the fight against unemployment and underdevelopment.

The points we should like to discuss obviously concern the problem of apartheid, the situation of women in Africa, and rural and urban training.

We should have liked to be able to give our position on all these questions and castigate the abject, inhuman system of apartheid. But much more authoritative voices than ours - I am thinking amongst others of His Excellency President Mugabe - have already spoken out in condemnation of this system. We support the relevant comments which have been made in this connection and the relevant proposals which have been made.

Nevertheless, we should like to dwell a little on the Report III concerning co-operatives. On page 22 of this report, under the heading "Organisations of employers and co-operatives", we read "While there is little evidence that co-operative societies are promoted by employers' organisations in Africa ...". We would have spoken out against this assertion if the lines which immediately followed did not considerably attenuate this statement. What may seem indifference on the part of the employers' organisations, in our view, is the little interest which the ILO and governments have shown until very recently in the activities of employers' organisations in trying to find solutions to the development of the co-operative movement, because we have never skimmed in our co-operation. In proof of this, in my country, during the last 12 months, my organisation with a twofold concern of contributing to building up our country and finding ways and means to reabsorb unemployment, has initiated and held for its members three workshops on the following subjects: the ONEB and the future of agriculture in Benin; the ONEB and the problem of unemployment, in general, and among youth, in particular; the development and promotion of SMEs and alternatives for the future.

We have concluded that we must promote the creation of co-operatives in the agricultural sector and in the informal secondary and tertiary sectors, for in our countries, which are on the way to becoming underdeveloped countries, the only way we can counter the burden of debt and our runaway pauperisation is by judicious and rational implementation of a reformed co-operative movement, which alone can save our economies and ensure our full and harmonious economic development.

These might be surprising comments coming from an Employers' delegate. But we do not think they should be so unexpected because the redistribution of greater wealth will leave no one a loser.

Finally, we express the wish that the ILO will continue to associate us in future not only with all its projects for creating co-operatives, but also with all projects which it initiates in our respective countries. In truth, the whole community would gain by this.

I should like to conclude by expressing my delegation's sincere thanks to the Government and people of Zimbabwe for the warm, brotherly welcome we have received since we arrived in this free African land of Zimbabwe.

(Mr. Vanie-Bi-Tra takes the Chair.)

Interpretation from French: Mr. TRAORE (Government delegate, Mauritania) -
In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

I would like to take this opportunity, like previous speakers, to congratulate the President on his election to guide the work of the Seventh African Regional Conference of the ILO.

I also wish to express our deepest gratitude to the Government and people of Zimbabwe for the warmth and the hospitality shown to my delegation since we arrived in Harare, this handsome and prestigious African capital.

Our gratitude also extends to Mr. Blanchard, Director-General of the ILO, and to his assistants for everything they did in ensuring that the late Mr. Elimane Kane was buried at Dar-el-Barka in Mauritania.

And finally, my thanks go to the heads of delegations and to the delegates who have paid tribute to the memory of our dead comrade.

My Government attaches the greatest importance to all subjects on the agenda of this Conference: apartheid, rural and urban training, women's work in Africa and the role of co-operatives in our countries.

The Islamic Republic of Mauritania has always condemned in the strongest terms the odious system of occupation and exploitation practised in Palestine, in South Africa and in Namibia. My country will continue as it has in the past to support the liberation movements in these territories.

For these reasons, we support the activities carried out by the ILO to condemn the policies and practices of apartheid as applied in South Africa and Namibia.

The specific item on the agenda of this Conference is the extension of all activities already undertaken by the ILO, more particularly since the adoption of the Declaration of 1981 concerning Action against Apartheid in South Africa and Namibia and its update by the unanimous adoption at the 75th Session of the International Labour Conference, June 1988, of a similar Declaration and of a programme of action against apartheid in compliance with the recommendations of the Tripartite Conference on Action against Apartheid which was held in Harare, from 3 to 6 May 1988.

As regards vocational training, whether in the rural or the urban environment, we are convinced in Mauritania that it is more than ever one of the most efficient ways of combating underdevelopment in the African countries.

This is one of the reasons why the restructuring of 12 December 1984, under His Excellency, Colonel Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya, President of the Military Committee for National Salvation and Head of State, placed vocational training among the main concerns of the Government.

The creation of a Secretariat of State responsible for ridding the country of illiteracy, and of a new department with special responsibilities for vocational training under the Ministry of Labour, demonstrates the attachment of my country to this basic concept. The Vocational training Centre at Nouakchott, which has been in existence since 1979, has trained a lot of people for various sectors of our national economy.

This centre is an excellent example of co-operation between the International Labour Organisation and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania. May I take this opportunity to offer my thanks to Mr. Dembele, Director of the ILO Office at Dakar, for his sincere interest in our country. The activities of the Labour Department consist not only in consolidating what we already have, but also in diversifying and decentralising vocational training so as to bring it to all rural and urban sectors. There again we count upon assistance from the ILO to meet this objective.

It is also as part of this clearly defined and tenaciously implemented policy that Mauritanian women find their rightful place in our social and economic development. A specific department for women's affairs has been set up. The appointment of a woman at the head of this department is further proof of the determination of our Government to see that women play an increasingly important role. Other women have assumed important posts in the civil service. In 1987, more than 300 women were recruited to work in offices, pursuant to a decision taken by the Government, in spite of the financial cost which this decision involved. These women contribute to the process of the economic and social development of the country.

Apart from these measures, it is not only equality between men and women which we are seeking, but also the stimulation of the energy and enthusiasm of women, to enable them to play a part, alongside their brothers, for there can be no development without their participation.

The role of co-operatives in Africa is important. Co-operatives allow for participation at the grass-roots level and contribute efficiently to economic and social development. We should think more upon this matter of co-operatives and bring to bear the necessary corrections so as better to adapt them to the realities of Africa.

In this connection, we welcome the adoption of Recommendation No. 127, because it constitutes the basis for a co-operative programme and concerns the role of co-operatives in the economic and social development of the developing countries. A number of co-operatives and pre-cooperative groups exist in Mauritania in agriculture, stock raising and craft industries. They have the moral, material and financial support of the Government. However, we are still very interested in efforts of the international organisations and friendly countries and welcome any assistance which they may offer in support of our social and economic activities.

Finally, it is a pleasure for me to be able to announce to this assembly that the trade union movement is making a come-back in Mauritania. We think that the Trade Union Congress of Mauritania will finally be held in January 1989, enabling the workers to achieve a democratically constituted structure.

By way of conclusion, I would like to wish the best of success to the work of the Seventh African Regional Conference of the ILO.

Interpretation from French: Mrs. MUDUKA (Government delegate, Zaire) - I am a little embarrassed at taking the floor after the distinguished speakers who have preceded me at this rostrum because I am convinced that everything has been said. However, given the importance for African countries of the matters dealt with in the Director-General's Report, please would you allow me to come back over certain points. I would also like to apologise to this distinguished assembly for having arrived late at this Conference. This is because my President appointed me to take over the work of the Department of Labour and Social Security only a week ago. Nevertheless, as my country intends to revitalise its links with the ILO, I had to rush to catch the train before it got to its destination. Therefore, please accept my apologies for any imperfections in my contribution and for the time I have devoted to this brief introduction.

First of all, I would like to carry out the agreeable duty of expressing to you the warmest greetings and best wishes from the founder president of the People's Revolutionary Movement, the President of the Republic of Zaire, Marshal Mobutu Sese Seko, and also the brotherly greetings from the whole of Zairian people who have assured us of their confidence in the success of this present assembly.

I should also like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Mr. Blanchard, Director-General of the International Labour Organisation, for having invited the Executive Council of my country to take part in and make our modest contribution to this forum.

I would also like to thank the President of the host country, Comrade Robert Gabriel Mugabe, and his Government, for having agreed to host this meeting and for the warm and brotherly welcome which my delegation has received. In the name of my delegation and on my own behalf, I should like to join the distinguished delegates who have spoken before me warmly to congratulate the President and also the officers of the meeting on the occasion of their brilliant election to the tasks which have been entrusted to them by the Seventh African Regional Conference of the ILO.

The Executive Council of the Republic of Zaire was extremely saddened by the tragic and unexpected death of Mr. Elimane Kane, Deputy Director-General of the ILO. This very noble son of Africa, whose intellectual, moral and human qualities are recognised by all, devoted the best part of his life to the service of our Organisation. May he find eternal rest with the God of our ancestors.

The contribution of my delegation to the Report of the Director-General and to the other technical documents - which I would like to praise here for the excellence of their approach and their objectivity - deals essentially with the general policy of the Republic of Zaire concerning training, vocational integration, the training of its active population, the integration of women in development and its position concerning the regime of apartheid.

My speech will therefore concentrate on the following points: the policy of the Executive Council concerning rural and urban training; its policy concerning vocational integration; its efforts in training rural populations; women's role in our society and, finally, our attitude to the inhuman regime of apartheid.

The problem of training is at the very heart of the concerns of the Government of my country. In his speech entitled "Review and outlook" of 5 December 1984, which was given on the occasion of his investiture for his third seven-year term, the founder President particularly stressed this important matter and provided the Executive Council with general guide-lines.

Since then, the activity of the Council has been mainly concerned with three major fields: first, the traditional training of young people in primary, secondary, higher and university education, with specific attention to technical and vocational training; second, continuous and permanent training of workers and, third, training of rural populations, particularly through functional literacy programmes.

Concerning the traditional training of young people, the Executive Council is attempting not only to consolidate traditional structures in our teaching system, but also to develop the technical and vocational training sectors, to make higher educational and university structures more efficient and to set up new structures which make it possible to diversify vocational qualifications in relation, of course, to certain up-to-date branches of work - in order to provide the country with the competent managers we need for development.

As regards the second area of concern, Zaire, with a view to promoting a quality workforce for our country, gives particular importance to continuous and permanent training. It is for this reason we have set up the National Institute

for Vocational Training, the Interdisciplinary Centre for Continuous Education and the National Centre for Co-ordination in Training and Development.

In addition to these training institutions, the National Union of Workers of Zaire (UNTZA) provides trade union training for its members, delegates and permanent officials in order to make them aware, responsible and capable of acting freely, not only in the defence and promotion of the interests of the workers and peasants but also to ensure they take part in the national development effort.

For its part, the National Association of Undertakings of Zaire contributes actively, through its bodies and members, in the financing of training activities within enterprises and ad hoc structures.

May I here welcome the contribution of the ILO in the establishment and operation of the National Institute for Vocational Training and other vocational training projects in Zaire.

I am happy to note that in spite of the difficult international situation, the ILO has always made efforts to provide young African States with human resources who are able to master up-to-date technologies and constitute a necessary "nursery" to help our new economies in their first steps. Therefore, I think it is essential to underline the importance Zaire attaches to the quality of experts in technical co-operation, their capacity for adapting to the real situations of our countries and their willingness to transmit know-how to their counterparts.

Concerning the training of rural populations, Zaire, in co-operation with the institutes within the United Nations system and non-governmental organisations, is developing programmes for promoting the rural sector, especially in agriculture, health and education. However, these efforts to promote the rural sector should be better organised and co-ordinated, especially within the specialised agencies of the United Nations, amongst which the ILO is one of the most active.

The second problem which concerns Zaire is that of vocational integration, or rather employment. The reduction of unemployment in Zaire implies, on the one hand, the creation of new outlets and, on the other hand, the census of jobs available and national abilities which might be able to occupy these posts. In the first case, the Executive Council is carrying out a five-year development plan during which a considerable number of jobs is planned. Within this specific framework, the National Association of Undertakings of Zaire plays a very important role. In the second case, the National Employment Service has been established, whose task it is to study the employment market and find places for jobseekers. In its efforts to cut down unemployment, Zaire has included in its programme the promotion of co-operatives, amongst which may be noted: co-operatives created by certain co-operative bodies such as the Hans-Seidel Foundation; organisations created and managed by religious bodies; young people's Party co-operatives; co-operatives set up on private initiative and, finally, co-operatives which are covered by the National Union.

Activities covered by this sector extend mainly to the agricultural, savings and services sectors.

However, my country recognises the difficulties inherent in the legislation, management and access of co-operative members to credit; in this context, the

experience of other member countries within the Organisation would be very helpful, as would technical assistance from the ILO.

My country also welcomes the recent appointment by the ILO of a regional adviser for co-operatives at its Area Office in Kinshasa.

Finally, as part of its efforts to cut down on unemployment, the Executive Council has adopted the conclusions of a joint study carried out in Zaire by the ILO and JASPA stating that small and medium enterprises could be extremely profitable in so far as they raise social standards of individuals, ensure them a substantial remuneration and guarantee social solidarity. It is thus indispensable to promote employment in the informal sector.

Zaire's programme in the fields of training, social integration and promotion of its active population is, as you will have noticed, an ambitious one. At this time of crisis its implementation will certainly involve problems.

The main difficulties with which the Executive Council has to cope are - in addition to those already mentioned concerning co-operatives - those linked to: the restoration or creation of training infrastructures, in the light of population growth; the adjustment of training needs to market needs; the lack of human and material resources to spread literacy into rural areas; the development of rural roads serving agricultural communities; the encouragement of economic co-operatives to take an interest in the agricultural sector; the extension of co-operatives into all parts of the country for the better training of peasants; the establishment in rural areas of centres for training in artisanal skills.

Given these difficulties and others liable to arise from the application of the social programme, Zaire remains open to any positive contribution, both bilaterally and multilaterally; it is in this spirit that my country appreciates the organisation of the present African Regional Conference of the ILO and other efforts of this nature which are aimed at the same objectives.

We cannot ensure that there is integral development in Africa without involving its prime movers in it - that is, women. In our country the People's Revolutionary Movement intends to liberate women from all servitude and to ensure that their role is promoted and that they are fully integrated into development.

Article 12 of the Constitution establishes the principle of non-discrimination before the law, particularly on the grounds of sex. As regards employment, it states; "Any citizen of Zaire has the right and duty to contribute through his work to the construction and prosperity of the nation. No-one shall suffer from discrimination in his work by reason of origin, sex or beliefs."

In applying this constitutional principle, the Zaire Labour Code in its first article recognises the right to work without distinction based on race, sex, political opinion, religious belief, etc.

And therefore Zairian women, under the People's Revolutionary Movement, provide their services without any discrimination.

Women occupy important positions within enterprises, whether public, parastatal or private. In addition, women are found in all the bodies of the Party and State. Workers enjoy equal pay for equal work, whatever their origin, sex or age.

Thanks to the Second Republic, Zairian women take part in decision-making and in the process of economic development. However, inequalities continue to exist for women in urban and rural areas. This is the reason why the Executive Secretariat for women and families, which is the national mechanism for women's training, is concentrating on further improving the training and health of women in rural areas, which is a sine qua non for their fuller participation in development.

Before I finish my statement I should like to underline the fact that the Republic of Zaire strongly condemns the shameful, inhuman and retrograde policy of apartheid in South Africa. It recommends that everything should be done to contribute to the dismantling of the system, with emphasis on dialogue. Zaire restates its support for the updated Declaration concerning Action against Apartheid in South Africa and Namibia, and the programmes of action against apartheid, adopted at the 75th Session of the International Labour Conference last June. Furthermore, Zaire supports the ILO's efforts with a view to participating in settling this problem. Zaire joins all the member countries of the ILO which are determined to abolish the apartheid regime. In addition to this concerted and diversified action, our Organisation should intensify its co-operation activities on behalf of national liberation movements and independent trade unions in South Africa and Namibia and also those of the front-line countries.

As you will have noted, the labour problems discussed at this Conference are of great interest to Zaire, which finds that they are vital concerns for development, and grounds for close co-operation with the National Association of Enterprises of Zaire and the National Union of Workers, in a tripartite spirit.

Therefore, in concluding, I hope that the resolutions of this Conference will contribute to the achievement of the objectives established by this general policy.

Zaire, my country, pledges to strengthen its relations with the ILO and comply with procedures regarding tripartite participation.

Long live the International Labour Organisation! Long live international co-operation! Long live African solidarity!

(The Conference adjourned at 11.45 a.m.)

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