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Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Wednesday, 5 July 2006, at 11.30 a.m.

President: Mr. MÉRORÈS (Haiti)
(Vice-President)

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LEVELS CONDUCIVE TO GENERATING FULL AND PRODUCTIVE
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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 11.40 a.m.

CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT AT THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS CONDUCTIVE TO GENERATING FULL AND PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT AND DECENT WORK FOR ALL, AND ITS IMPACT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (continued) (E/2006/15 and Add.1, E/2006/33, E/2006/50/Rev.1, E/2006/52, E/2006/55, E/2006/NGO/1-36, E/2006/CRP.2, E/2006/CRP.6 and E/CN.6/2006/CRP.4

Mr. LAWAL (Nigeria), having associated himself with the statement made by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that employment alone was not a panacea for poverty, and that sustained economic growth and sustainable development must not be pursued at the expense of full employment and decent work. Nigeria's experience in implementing a comprehensive national economic empowerment development strategy had highlighted the difficulty of pursuing an economic growth strategy without a corresponding employment-generation component. While the National Directorate of Employment had worked to provide employment opportunities, more needed to be done to overcome the challenges of massive lay-offs and the downsizing of the public sector. Employment strategies should seek to improve productivity and build capacities in labour-intensive sectors. As rural development was essential to combating poverty, various microfinance banks had been set up in Nigeria to create job opportunities, increase productivity and raise incomes.

Achieving full employment and decent work required good governance, an enabling economic environment and appropriate policy and regulatory frameworks. The Nigerian Government therefore strongly supported the protection of workers' rights through balanced and regulated industrial relations. It had recently democratized the country's labour unions by amending the Trade Union Act.

The interdependence of national economies in a globalized world made it necessary to involve developing countries more closely in decision-making and norm-setting at the global level through a rigorous reform of the international financial and trading system. It was regrettable that the deadlines for concluding the Doha development agenda had not been met. Global development policies must be supportive of full employment. They should encourage

greater foreign direct investment in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. They should also take into account the intricate links between poverty, unemployment and underemployment in rural and urban areas.

Migrant workers provided enormous benefits to both source and destination countries. Nigeria supported the call for regulatory frameworks to guarantee humane, safe and orderly migration flows, and looked forward to the high-level dialogue of the United Nations General Assembly on that subject. The Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies should continue to report on their contributions to achieving the goal of full employment and decent work for all, for example at the annual ministerial review and the Development Cooperation Forum. Nigeria also supported the integration of decent work country programmes into national development programmes and strategies. Lastly, the United Nations system required adequate, predictable and stable funding that was commensurate with its increasing role and responsibilities.

Mr. NARUSEB (Namibia), having associated himself with the statement made by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that most countries were affected by rising levels of unemployment and poverty, especially among young people, women and persons with disabilities. Many initiatives had been undertaken, in particular by the developing countries, to create national economic environments conducive to the goals of economic growth and full employment, yet their relative lack of success had caused many to question whether those goals were truly realizable. As the Secretary-General had concluded in his report (E/2006/55), the double challenge was to increase both the rate of economic growth and the employment content of growth. Progress in those areas was necessary in order to meet the Millennium Development Goal of halving extreme poverty and hunger by 2015.

At the international and national levels, full and productive employment and decent work objectives must be integrated into multilateral and bilateral cooperation and all aspects of planning and economic growth. All policies must likewise be evaluated in terms of their potential to improve the lives of the impoverished unemployed or underemployed.

Africa, like other developing regions, faced the daunting challenge of worsening employment and social conditions. The African Union had made decent work and poverty reduction a priority and policies were being implemented to replace jobless growth with employment-rich growth and decent work for all. A meeting on that issue for the countries of southern Africa would be held in Namibia in September 2006.

Prior to independence in 1990, Namibia had experienced forced labour in various forms, under the apartheid system; that had left a legacy of high unemployment, inadequate skills and a large percentage of working poor. His Government was building a system of education for all, but currently few secondary school graduates continued to higher studies while even post-secondary level students were not prepared for the labour market and most school leavers took employment in the informal sector. Educational and economic policies must, therefore, prepare youth for the needs of the informal sector, in particular by supporting small and medium-sized enterprises and entrepreneurship.

His Government had established a national commission for employment creation and was playing a lead role in the Youth Employment Network established by the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations and the World Bank. An employment services bill was being drafted which would support economic growth while promoting decent remuneration and working conditions.

The Recommendation on the Employment Relationship adopted at the 95th session of the International Labour Conference would serve as a model for formulating more effective protections for Namibia's most exploited workers. The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare had initiated discussions with the ILO office in South Africa with regard to the formulation of Namibia's decent work country programme.

The issues of productive employment and decent work for all were critical to the future survival of humankind. He therefore supported the proposal made by the Secretary-General that the Economic and Social Council consider launching a decade for full and productive employment and decent work for all.

Mr. BELLERIVE (Haiti), having associated himself with the statement made by the delegation of South Africa on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that over 80 per cent of the Haitian population was currently unemployed. In such circumstances, the concept of decent work, employment policies and the establishment of an environment conducive to private investment were more than merely abstract words. One of the main reasons for the political, economic and social instability of the past two decades had undoubtedly been the inability of successive Governments to implement a genuine employment policy offering decent choices. It was a fundamental objective of the new Government, by making decent work available at home, to rekindle hope in a population that often saw no other way out of poverty than emigration. To achieve that objective would require literacy campaigns, basic education and vocational training, and would also require investors to be convinced that Haiti had a stable and secure administrative and legal system.

Pursuing the first seven Millennium Development Goals was dependent on the implementation of the eighth: that of developing a global partnership for development. On 25 July 2006, a pledging conference would be held as part of efforts to extend the Interim Cooperation Framework to December 2007, so as to enable the Haitian Government to implement a medium-term poverty reduction programme. The country's development partners would be asked to support the rapid implementation of a social peace plan that was aimed at establishing the largest number of jobs possible. The Haitian people were at a turning point, and they needed international solidarity more than ever. Since such assistance must be efficient and well coordinated, the Government had requested the renewal of the mandate of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti and was strengthening its own strategic think tank.

Mr. MILLER (United States of America) said that 230 years ago the founders of the United States of America had declared their independence and established a new nation based on the inalienable right of all to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness - noble aims akin to the aspirations of the right to development. He noted that each of the rights enunciated in the United States Declaration of Independence was inextricably linked to work. For billions of people around the world, including the poorest of the poor, work was their very means of survival while the livelihoods of farmers, herders or ranchers came directly from their work,

for most people, it was money earned through work that secured freedom from dependency, whether on family, community or government. Economic independence and freedom went hand in hand with political independence and freedom.

In his second inaugural address, the current President of the United States had declared that the United States would stand with those who stood up for their own freedom. That commitment had both political and economic aspects. It was necessary to work for greater economic openness and liberalization in trade and investment flows so that all could share in growing global prosperity. To help those most in need, the United States Government had nearly tripled official development assistance since 2000. But for the poorest, it was not assistance that was needed, but meaningful, productive employment and decent work. The role of government was to create and maintain an economic environment conducive to growth and to unleash the creative ability of individuals and the private sector, which had an unparalleled ability to create productive employment. An environment that promoted entrepreneurship and provided for the rule of law, investment in health and education, economic freedom and regulatory stability for the private sector was key everywhere, and the United States Millennium Challenge Corporation used such factors as criteria for allocating assistance. It also specifically considered the time required to open a business as a major indicator of job creation potential. Where there was less bureaucracy, there were more small and medium-sized enterprises, and there was far less corruption.

To address unemployment among young people, it was necessary to set up public-private partnerships in education, including vocational and on-the-job training to develop relevant job-related skills. Such programmes also helped societies adapt to changes that accompanied rapid growth and globalization. The United States workforce was dynamic and flexible: each year, about a third of the workforce moved to new jobs with better opportunities, while the average worker in the United States would hold 10 jobs by the age of 38. At the same time, job creation must go hand in hand with respect for fundamental principles and rights at work, including freedom of association and the right to bargain collectively, the elimination of forced or compulsory labour, the abolition of exploitive child labour and the elimination of discrimination. The United States supported the ILO decent work country programmes as a valuable contribution to broader development frameworks. To help fight the worst forms of child labour, his Government had contributed more than \$295 million to ILO.

Thomas Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of Independence, had referred to the pursuit of happiness, which was obviously something each person must define individually. Clearly, one of the deepest forms of happiness came from the sense of accomplishment in a job undertaken in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. That was the very definition of decent work, the foundation of development and the cornerstone of the American dream.

Ms. MWAU (Observer for Kenya) stressed the importance of productive employment and decent work for poverty reduction and the elimination of social exclusion. Given the high unemployment rate in Kenya, her Government had made full employment a key priority in its poverty reduction strategy. It actively promoted micro and small enterprises as a source of quality employment; as a result, the number of such enterprises was increasing by 10 per cent a year. Nine out of ten micro and small enterprises employed women and young people and half of the funding allocated by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Enterprise to micro and small enterprises started by young people went to young women.

A study undertaken by her Government in cooperation with ILO on the mainstreaming of gender issues into employment, agriculture and rural development had shown that poverty could be reduced by 5 per cent if women were truly empowered in those areas. Her Government had therefore established a commission to ensure that gender equality was mainstreamed in all development programmes. It had also decided to take into account unpaid work carried out by women in its official statistics and, in the context of its efforts to promote universal free primary education, to focus on gender parity and strengthening the performance of girls.

Although gross domestic product had increased steadily over the past three years, poverty had increased, which proved that economic growth alone was not sufficient to eliminate poverty, unemployment and underemployment. It was therefore important to establish an integrated framework of social and economic policies at the national and international levels which promoted the creation of productive employment. Such policies should include impact evaluations based on clear indicators of success for both men and women. International financial institutions and development partners must likewise ensure that employment creation and decent work were key elements of any assistance they provided.

In the area of trade, value-added African products and fair prices for those products in international markets would help stimulate employment and decent work opportunities. That would have a proportionally greater effect on women, who were over-represented in sectors such as agriculture, and would stimulate skills development, increase productivity, income and employment opportunities, and promote industrialization and sustainable development. Economic policies must therefore be linked to the requirements of the international marketplace. She supported calls for a coherent policy to overcome the effects of globalization on both the creation and the loss of jobs.

It was important for African countries to collect up-to-date statistics on their labour markets, including statistics on skills and training. They must also strengthen their institutional framework and encourage links with the marketplace. That would improve both job and product quality, help identify gaps and contribute to informed decision-taking and planning. A viable agricultural sector must be maintained while at the same time adopting measures such as reducing taxes, which would stimulate job creation and help eliminate job insecurity. Adapting policies to the labour market would also lead to the creation of decent and environmentally friendly employment.

Lastly, she said that her delegation remained optimistic about the contribution technical cooperation could make to achieving the goal of sustainable development.

Mr. MAKOTIĆ (Observer for Croatia) said that while there was no universal model for efforts to achieve the goal of full employment and decent work for all, a flexible approach adapted to local conditions would help create an enabling environment for job creation and improved social protection for all. His Government had focused on labour and social initiatives and on addressing challenges such as competitiveness and demography. Reform of the pension system had promoted investment, economic growth and development; the labour market had been reformed to reflect changes in the workplace; and entrepreneurship was being encouraged, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises, women and persons with special needs, with particular attention being paid to access to credit. The importance of decent work standards had been recognized and the existence of both conventional and unconventional forms of work had been acknowledged. Social security was therefore linked to personal, and not employment, status.

Unemployment remained a concern, although the results of government efforts to lower it were encouraging. In 2005 a first national employment action plan had been drawn up in accordance with European Union guidelines; the plan would be updated every year. Employment incentives were also available to employers who met certain criteria with respect to the number of permanent employees and overall annual turnover. His Government attached particular importance to social dialogue, which was one reason why its social security and labour-market reforms, aimed at removing administrative barriers and promoting a positive investment climate, enjoyed wide support.

In order to promote equal opportunities, including employment opportunities, for men and women, the institutional and legislative framework for the elimination of gender-based discrimination had been strengthened, with the establishment of a government office, an Ombudsman and local commissions for gender equality. A third national policy for the promotion of gender equality was under preparation and would include a section on equal opportunities, the elimination of gender-based discrimination in the labour market and protection of the dignity of working women and men.

Educational reform was also being undertaken to prepare graduates for changes in the labour market, with a view to developing a society based on innovation and not just investment. Such efforts were part of his Government's commitment to using every available resource to eliminate poverty, social exclusion and discrimination. It would continue to work with national, regional and international partners, through the Economic and Social Council, to further those goals.

Mr. HANNESSON (Iceland) said a decent job gave people a stake in society and a strong incentive to work for social stability. It was therefore essential to channel the energy of individuals by ensuring their full participation in the economy as part of broader efforts to address major threats to international security such as terrorism, poverty, disease and environmental degradation. Unfortunately, there were currently close to 200 million unemployed in the world who did not participate in their economies and whose ability to contribute as producers or consumers was severely limited. A further 1.2 billion people lived in extreme poverty and more than 850 million were undernourished. That proved that employment alone was not a solution to poverty; underemployment or low-paid jobs kept

people below the poverty line and gave them little incentive to contribute to stability or take account of environmental concerns. Exclusion of such a large number of people from effective participation in society seriously affected social stability. Growing youth unemployment in particular was a major global challenge and women too must be involved in the global employment reform process. The empowerment of women, for example, greatly increased a country's competitive advantage.

He noted that small island States faced particular problems in promoting productive employment. It was more costly for them to ship products to markets, their economies were narrowly based and employment was often seasonal or dependent on one or two sectors.

A positive investment climate was essential for increased private sector development, growth and job creation and particular attention should be given to small and medium-sized enterprises, which could only thrive in countries governed by the rule of law, where property law in particular was enforced and where investment and financial dealings were secure. While encouraged by the work being done in the area of property rights and their relationship to sustainable development, he expressed concern that progress in reforming the investment climate in many developing countries was too slow.

Adequate infrastructure was another important prerequisite for private sector development and job creation and he stressed the importance of helping developing countries improve their long-term access to energy services, while bearing in mind environmental considerations. The developing countries must attract domestic and international investment in clean and efficient energy services.

Education was a prerequisite for capitalizing on the opportunities for sustainable and high-quality employment afforded by globalization. Certain developing economies had benefited greatly from the globalization of technology because they had well-educated workforces. A less desirable effect of globalization had been to hold down wages, especially in developing countries or in industrialized countries where human trafficking had contributed to increasing the number of people in poorly paid employment.

Three quarters of the 1.2 billion people living in extreme poverty lived in rural areas of developing countries. Since they could not all migrate to the cities, their existence in rural areas must be made sustainable by focusing on agriculture and developing poverty reduction strategies which targeted the rural poor. The international community must likewise ensure that the trading environment was not hostile to sustainable production and therefore to employment.

Ms. MILLAR (Australia) said that paid work was central to alleviating poverty, increasing equality and promoting social integration. At the international level, greater coordination and cooperation between ILO and other United Nations agencies concerned with poverty reduction, economic planning and human security would enhance efforts to attain the goal of full and productive employment. The developed countries could help create the preconditions for employment generation in developing countries by encouraging economic growth, effective government, investment in people and regional stability and cooperation.

Governments should examine their domestic policies to ensure that they provided the capacity and flexibility to promote sustainable economic development, thereby enhancing growth, employment creation and international competitiveness. The challenge for all economies was to ensure that economic growth and development were harnessed to providing good standard-of-living outcomes for all members of society. Her Government supported the commitment made at the 2005 World Summit to make full and productive employment and decent work a central objective of national and international policies.

Strong economic growth was the key to job creation. Over the past decade, the Australian economy had performed strongly and unemployment rates currently stood at a 28-year low. It had benefited from labour-market and welfare reforms designed to boost productivity while protecting vulnerable sections of Australian society. Her country's experience revealed that workforce flexibility was clearly linked to productivity growth and economic prosperity. The most recent reforms in its workplace relations system reflected a growing realization of the importance of ensuring greater international competitiveness by linking wage increases to productivity improvements. The Australian Government would continue to develop and implement economic policies that promoted low unemployment and increased workforce participation while providing decent work outcomes and protection for vulnerable members of society.

Mr. RIPERT (France), after endorsing the statement made by the representative of Finland on behalf of the European Union, said that his Government supported the proposed revitalization of the Economic and Social Council and the establishment of the Development Cooperation Forum. France attached great importance to the rapid and effective introduction of innovative development financing mechanisms, one of the first examples of which was the solidarity levy on air tickets that had just come into effect in France. That initiative should yield some €200 million annually and provide financing for the UNITAID International Drug Purchase Facility launched at the joint initiative of Brazil, Chile, France, Norway and the United Kingdom. The Facility should provide the most needy with genuine access to treatment and boost international efforts to combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

On the question of the reform of operational activities, his Government advocated a global and inclusive approach. The United Nations had a role to play in the emerging countries as well as in the least developed countries and fragile States. The reform should extend to funds and programmes as well as the specialized agencies and should involve rethinking the whole range of operational and standard-setting functions as well as those relating to the protection of individual rights. France supported the idea of having resident coordinators with reinforced powers, a single United Nations office in a given country and a single country programme based on the existing United Nations Development Assistance Framework.

The choice of “decent work” as the central theme of the session was appropriate, since it was an issue that concerned all countries and affected people directly in the context of globalization. The way it was approached would differ from country to country, depending on the particular situation and objectives of each country. In some cases, the main issue would be the transition from informal to more structured employment patterns; in others, the problems of unemployment; and in others, ways to guarantee greater career security for salaried staff. However, underlying all such approaches was the need to create productive and dignified employment. The basis for promoting decent work was the 1998 ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, which set out fundamental rights whose universal character was beyond dispute. It was also important to refer to other norms relating to working conditions, health and safety at work, and the right to lifelong training. It was important to move

in the direction of the right to social protection for all, as the President of France would seek to do at the forthcoming G8 Summit by launching the idea of health insurance mechanisms for the poorest countries.

The international community must provide itself with the means to meet the employment challenge, which presupposed continuous international monitoring. Such monitoring could and should be undertaken by ILO. There was a need for greater coherence between the actions of the specialized agencies and the financial, economic, commercial and social policies put in place by the international financial institutions. Another area where greater coordination was required was operational activities on the ground. By exploring such questions, the Council would be contributing to one of the key debates of the twenty-first century: how to give a social dimension to economic and financial globalization, and how to construct a world in which men and women could live and work in dignity.

Mr. SARDENBERG (Brazil) said his country supported the fundamental principles and rights at work as defined in ILO instruments; it had one of the oldest and most universal social security systems in Latin America; and its policies on the eradication of forced and child labour were being strictly enforced. However, further progress would be hampered unless it was paralleled by the development of an international economic environment that was more friendly to developing countries.

Development, economic growth and employment creation were inextricably linked and mutually reinforcing, and measures to promote them were necessary at the national, regional and international levels. The subject would remain on the international agenda for as long as it took to achieve durable progress, for development offered the only means of creating new high-quality jobs or improving existing ones. He regarded the newly approved General Assembly resolution on follow-up to the development outcome of the 2005 World Summit (A/60/L.59) - notwithstanding its shortcomings - as a step forward which should form part of a larger campaign.

Some commentators had downplayed the importance of the international environment for generating full and productive employment and decent work, but experience had shown that the international environment had a huge influence on nations' ability to develop and to create

jobs at the necessary rate. The best way to tackle those problems was through international cooperation within the framework of Millennium Development Goal 8, on the development of a global partnership for development; sadly, progress towards that goal was slow and painful.

The creation of a level playing field in the international trading system was vital if the goal of full and productive employment and decent work for all was to be achieved. He hoped that Brazil's partners in the Doha Round of trade negotiations would realize how critical a successful outcome to the negotiations was to achieving that goal.

Mr. PUJA (Indonesia) said his Government assigned high priority to the generation of full and productive employment in its national development agenda and had been striving to provide people with opportunities to lift themselves out of poverty. The Tripartite Action Plan for 2002-2005 had been extended for a further three years and was the framework within which the Government and the employers' and workers' organizations, with ILO support, could endeavour to advance towards the goal of decent work.

The promotion of decent work highlighted the social, as opposed to the purely economic, dimension of migration. It would not only help ensure protection of labour standards, but would also put the achievement of sustainable development into perspective. In that context, the Economic and Social Council should address the subject of poverty eradication and the importance of employment and decent work at its current session, and should identify ways of tackling other development-related issues.

In the interest of promoting full and productive employment, rapid-impact initiatives and unconventional methods must be devised to ensure that the limited resources available for creating jobs achieved the maximum potential economic gain. One way to do that would be to manage the migration of temporary workers in such a way as to ensure that migration benefited their countries of origin as well as the receiving countries, thereby avoiding a definitive brain drain. Migrant workers' remittances could help finance national development. Investment, technical assistance and market access for developing countries' products would also generate further employment in developing countries. Perhaps most importantly, however, a genuine global partnership for development must be created in order to provide an enabling international environment for development.

His Government was currently implementing pro-growth, pro-employment and pro-poor strategies and would continue to pursue its efforts to enhance international cooperation designed to arrive at a more balanced, coordinated strategy for sustainable growth.

Mr. ŠPIDLA (European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities) deplored the fact that the potential impact of productive employment and decent work on development had long been neglected in development strategies and received little attention in the Millennium Development Goals. Conversely, the 2005 World Summit had dwelt on the need to promote it. All countries had had to make adjustments to meet the challenges of globalization, but not all of them were able to deal with its consequences or derive benefit from it. Consequently, developing its social dimension called for greater national and international efforts to achieve both solidarity and good governance.

In its May 2006 communication entitled “Promoting decent work in the world”, the European Commission undertook to help promote decent work for all throughout the world as part of its efforts to strengthen the social dimension of globalization. The Commission had proposed a strategy and guidelines for improving the implementation of the European Union’s internal and external policies on development, trade, migration and bilateral and multilateral external relations. It would work actively with the organizations of the United Nations system, regional organizations, social partners, the business world and other development actors from civil society.

Non-State actors should be more involved in the preparation, implementation and follow-up of poverty-reduction and development strategies and programmes. The same went for the coordination and programming of external assistance provided by the European Union and by the United Nations and other international and national donors. The attainment of decent work must be based on the four pillars of productive and freely chosen employment, the right to work, social protection and social dialogue, as well as their gender dimension. The activities of the United Nations and other actors should reflect a similar approach.

Like the Lisbon Strategy and the European Social Agenda, the decent work objective called for an integrated and coherent approach that combined economic, employment, social and environmental objectives, and required a strategy that was sufficiently open to allow its

implementation to take account of the specificities and diversity of economic and social situations. The realization of the objective depended on the full cooperation of the countries and regions concerned. The Commission therefore supported the integration of decent work country programmes into national and regional development programmes, poverty reduction strategies and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, with the latter reflecting the countries' and regions' needs and priorities.

Mr. DURUFLÉ (International Association of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions) said that to ignore the global crisis in employment would lead to a deterioration of the human ecosystem that could well be more dangerous than the deterioration of the natural ecosystem. Work was bound up with human dignity. Since not all work was naturally decent, the concept of decent work needed to be distinguished from work for all and mere employment growth. Decent work could be defined as an activity that guaranteed the individual's freedom, security and dignity, as perceived by the individual concerned. The concept of decent work, or even of employment of any kind, was not applicable in situations where it did not offer a way out from situations of destitution.

ILO norms should be implemented with no exceptions and should be regarded as baseline standards to be applied throughout the world of work, and not only to salaried workers. The majority of work was not salaried and assumed a wide diversity of forms, encompassing independent workers alongside those in the informal sector. Given that the informal sector was steadily growing in all countries of the world, more precise information was needed on informal work, particularly on the internal dynamics of the informal economy. Such information could provide the basis for measures to ease the transition from the informal to the formal sector.

The task of ensuring full and productive employment and decent work was a shared social responsibility. Where the individual was concerned, it presupposed a personal sense of responsibility and freedom from extreme poverty, together with the regulation of child labour, the provision of school education, equality in the workplace and vocational training opportunities. The responsibilities of firms included respect for ILO norms, a formal commitment to decent work, the practice of collective bargaining and a supportive attitude to start-up enterprises. States had a duty to provide individuals with the education they would need in their working lives, to limit or regulate the informal sector, to provide enabling infrastructures

such as microfinance and social insurance schemes, to promote craft industries and small-scale cooperatives, and to adopt investment-friendly laws. The international community, for its part, should regulate in favour of fair trade conducive to global growth and to harmonization rather than uniformization; ensure the free circulation of labour; require States to honour their aid pledges and increase aid through innovative funding mechanisms; and place the emphasis on multilateral rather than bilateral cooperation.

Full and productive employment and decent work were ultimately inseparable. If it was not productive, work could not be decent, since it did not confer dignity on the person undertaking it. If present trends continued, there would be fewer and fewer productive jobs: it was therefore no longer possible to adopt the kind of laissez-faire attitude common at the time when someone who lost their job could easily find a new short-term job in a different sector. In an age of non-regulation, there was a need for forceful and wide-ranging measures. Otherwise the scene would be set for violent social unrest commensurate with the resentment felt by those deprived of decent work and, hence, of their dignity.

Ms. LORETO (Ius Primi Viri) said that the creation of a national and international environment conducive to full and productive employment and decent work for all called for men and women capable of creating sustainable development. Failure to integrate the abundant technological and cultural tools that existed had led to crisis and conflict; a new form of education, based on the universal values of human dignity and human rights, was needed to create a new generation of men and women with the ability to apply those values and integrate their actions. Without such individuals, sustainable development would be difficult to achieve. The development of that form of education was the prime task of her association, which had developed an integrated scientific methodology for translating abstract principles into action.

The meeting rose at 1.35 p.m.