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Presidents: Mr. Maatough, Mr. Attigbe

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Mr. PATER (*Minister of Social Policy, Poland*)

With great satisfaction we have read the Director-General's Report on the work of the Organization for 2002-03. It testifies to the significance of the Organization's achievement resulting from its unrelenting everyday toil. The Director-General's summary gives me the opportunity to also look back on Poland's achievements, with the ILO's cooperation, over the last 15 years. The Organization was one of the key actors that helped Poland create the structures for social dialogue and helped it lay the foundations for national legislation on collective labour relations. In close cooperation with the ILO, we, the Government, together with the social partners, learnt the lesson of active partnership which have resulted in our ambitious social reforms. The ILO also helped us establish modern labour market structures which did not exist at the beginning of our economic and social transformation. Now that we are striving to modernize both our labour market and social inclusion policies, we are also tapping into the Organization's extensive expertise.

Hardly a month has passed since our new membership of the European Union. In its programmes of technical assistance, the ILO was very helpful in making our EU membership a reality. The Director-General's Report also makes us look towards the future . to the challenges ahead of us and our Organization. They now centre around the phenomenon of globalization to which we are trying to find adequate responses, both at national and international levels. While making sure that globalization produces the greatest good for many, we have to ensure that decent employment is a realistic opportunity for our citizens, that social exclusion is prevented or reduced, and that we move from a welfare State to a welfare and workfare society. These are the objectives of our Organization which can be found in its key programmes. We support them. We see in the International Labour Organization, with its tripartism, great potential for forging the necessary social consensus to achieve those objectives. We have been very impressed by the work of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization. The Director-General's Report, *A fair globalization: The role of the ILO*, gives due credit to the World Commission's work and invites this session of the Conference to discuss those very topical issues. We have gone a long way toward embracing globalization and focusing on how to ensure the fairness of the opportunities it offers. By reducing the physical distance between people, globalization was perceived as expanding the social divide between them. Now, we know that an expanding social gap is not inevitable. If properly managed, the opportunities of globalization will, by far, exceed any incidental dangers.

Good governance is a prerequisite to good management at national and international levels. We believe that every human being has the right to be well governed. I might add that Poland was among the pioneers who introduced that concept back in 1998 in the context of the United Nations Human Rights Commission. We were, therefore, very pleased to see the issue of good governance well-appreciated in the World Commission's report. Indeed, much can be said about improving governance of the global economy. But we have to do our fair share at home, too. Good governance, built on democracy, social equity, the rule of law and human rights, ensures the high quality of national and local policies and institutions which must be in place if we want globalization to benefit all of our societies.

We should continue to work very hard to improve standards of good governance in our country. We know that we have progressed substantially in that direction over the last 15 years, not least because we have used the expertise of this Organization. We have been impressed by the ILO's support for coherent national policies ensuring the best possible benefits from globalization for all. We also look favourably on the new interesting initiatives in this regard suggested in the Commission's report. We will be following the discussion in this body on globalization very closely.

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