

# Provisional Record 19

Ninety-second Session, Geneva, 2004

## Fourteenth sitting

Monday 14 June 2004, 10.00 a.m.

*Presidents: Mr. Ray Guevara, Mr. Wade*

19/18

Mr. WOJCIK (*Workers' delegate, Poland*)

On behalf of the Polish Workers' delegation and on my behalf, I would like to congratulate the President and all the Vice-Presidents on their election to chair this august body, the 92nd Session of the International Labour Conference. I would like to extend my congratulations also to the Director-General for his Report: *A fair globalization: The role of the ILO*. Similarly, as in previous years, the Report is of the highest quality. It is an instant and concrete reaction to the report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization.

“Labour is not a commodity.” Sixty years ago, the International Labour Conference confirmed this fundamental truth in the Declaration Philadelphia. This truth must be remembered constantly by everybody. I believe that ‘considerable part of contemporary economic and employment problems is provoked by the incorrect implementation of this idea in practice or by lack of its implementation at all. We appreciate very much the trend in ratification of eight fundamental Conventions. According to the Global Report under the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work 2004, results seem to be very promising. The number of ratifications has increased significantly since the Declaration has been adopted. By the year 1998, 69 per cent of the ILO Members had ratified the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and five years later, 80 per cent of them had already done it. Respective figures for the other core Conventions are as follows: 79 per cent and 87 per cent for the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98); 85 per cent and 92 per cent for Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29); 76 per cent and 91 per cent for Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105); 39 per cent and 71 per cent for Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138); 0 per cent and 83 per cent for Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182); 77 per cent and 91 per cent for Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100); and 75 per cent and 90 per cent for Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111). Recalculation of the same ratifications in terms of percentage of population of the respective ILO member States shows quite a different, unpalatable picture. Today, some 54 per cent of the world population cannot be assured of freedom of association, 51 per cent of freedom of collective bargaining. Some one-third of the world population still have no legal guarantee against forced labour, child labour and discrimination at the workplace. This is the real picture of labour conditions in the world. With this view, I am entirely convinced that liberalization of trade cannot lead to better prosperity, equitable economy and fair distribution of goods in the world. Without globalization of at least core labour standards, without globalization of the solidarity, a fair globalization will remain only a beautiful, unrealistic idea.

Non-payment of wages and salaries due has become a problem in Poland in the latest years. Employees are very often deprived of their wages or payment of their wages has been significantly delayed. However, Poland has ratified the Protection of Wages Convention, 1949 (No. 95), yet more and more cases of non-observance of its provisions have been recorded. In 2003, in the State Labour Inspection (SLI) of the Katowice District, in 38 per cent of enterprises investigated undue payment of wages were recorded and in 32 per cent of enterprises wages were not paid on time. In the other district (Lubuskie) the State Labour Inspection issued at the same time 313 orders concerning non-payment of wages for 6,149 employees. These unacceptable practices are very widely exercised in the whole country and what is more one can observe a serious lack of effective sanctions in such cases. As was stated by the Polish Workers' delegate in the course of the Committee on the Application of Standards of this session of the International Labour Conference, two-year-old cases are daily practice as regards workers' complaints for non-payment of wages, while at this time the workers concerned are usually deprived both of work and remuneration. This is only an example.

I am deeply regretful that my compatriots from the Government, as well as from the Employers did not mention even one word concerning labour standards in their speeches to this session of the Conference. This is of special importance because they underlined the necessity of good governance and flexibility of labour relations.

I would like to express my strong conviction that good governance cannot exist without the observance of labour standards and the flexibility of labour relations is in clear opposition to labour standards.