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**Trade Union Assembly on Labour and the Environment**  
**First meeting**  
Nairobi  
15–17 January 2006

## **Report of the Trade Union Assembly on Labour and the Environment on the work of its first meeting**

### **Introduction**

The first meeting of the Trade Union Assembly on Labour and the Environment was held at the headquarters of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Nairobi, from 15 to 17 January 2006.

The meeting was organized by UNEP in cooperation with the International Labour Foundation for Sustainable Development (Sustainlabour), the Varda Group, and the International Labour Organization (ILO) and with the support of the United Nations Global Compact. It reflected a commitment made initially by UNEP, ILO, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the Trade Union Advisory Committee to OECD at a high-level meeting held in 2002 during the World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg to identify linkages between sustainable employment practices and environmental management. It further constituted an attempt to achieve the objectives of chapter 29 of Agenda 21, adopted at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

### **I. Opening of the meeting**

The meeting was opened at 10.05 a.m. on Sunday, 15 January 2006, by Mr. Eric Falt, Director of the Division of Communications and Public Information of UNEP.

Opening statements were made by Mr. Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director, UNEP; Mr. Jim Baker, Director, Bureau for Workers' Activities, ILO (ILO/ACTRAV); Ms. Maria Neira, Director, Department of Protection of the Human Environment, World Health Organization (WHO); Mr. Willy Thys, General Secretary, World Confederation of Labour (WCL); Mr. Andrew Kailembo, General Secretary, International Confederation of Free Trade Unions – African Regional Organization (ICFTU-AFRO); and Mr. Kivutha Kibwana, Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources, Republic of Kenya.

In his opening statement, Mr. Töpfer welcomed the Assembly to UNEP headquarters, noting with satisfaction that representatives of more than 150 countries had gathered to promote international cooperation and develop new ideas with regard to labour and the environment. Noting the important role of trade unions in creating a linkage between the twin pillars of the environment and economic development, he said that the aim of the Assembly was to address

environmental issues while at the same time exploring means of stimulating economic development. In that regard, he urged the participants to consider the social dimension in their discussions. Recalling the statement made by the Secretary-General at the sixtieth session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York in 2005, which underlined that freedom from want was a precondition for peace and stability, he said that the Assembly was part of the cooperation process necessary for the creation of sustainable employment and a peaceful future.

Mr. Baker expressed appreciation on behalf of ILO for the recognition by UNEP of the importance of trade union involvement in environmental issues. Noting that the Assembly represented millions of workers, he recalled that, in 1977, ILO and UNEP had signed a memorandum of understanding forming an initial basis for cooperation. That interaction was to be intensified to reflect the improved understanding of links between labour and the environment. ILO brought two special characteristics to the forum: first, it placed emphasis on tripartite discussions between workers, employers and Governments; and second, it focused on standards. Those standards went beyond occupational safety, health and employment criteria to encompass freedom of association and collective bargaining, thereby allowing workers to be actors with capacities to solve the problems of poverty and oppression, rather than simply victims. Trade unions were therefore a force for democracy and could spearhead change in society. The present meeting provided a valuable opportunity to mobilize workers in favour of the environment.

Ms. Neira noted with appreciation the involvement of WHO in the first meeting of the Assembly. She indicated that her organization's participation would be useful in discussions on labour, environment and sustainable development because health underpinned those issues and the 192 member States of WHO could constitute a force for change on those issues. WHO was preparing to launch a report finding that twenty-five per cent of the global burden of disease was due to environmental causes, accounting for thirteen million deaths per year. The role of WHO went beyond working to decrease workplace deaths and involved efforts to promote a healthy work environment. For example, a potential avian flu pandemic and the recent outbreaks of severe acute respiratory syndrome had their origins in unhealthy, unsafe and unsustainable methods of production. In conclusion, she said that the Assembly represented an enormous force to promote health and bring about a win-win solution for labour and the environment.

Mr. Thys noted the importance of the Assembly as the first structured relationship between the trade union movement and UNEP, and drew attention to three major themes. First, the current era of globalization and competitiveness often involved cutting costs, particularly labour, by transferring activities from North to South, with negative consequences for the health and well-being of workers. Second, protection of the environment, which had been seen as a threat to industry and jobs, was increasingly viewed as a long-term tool for fighting poverty and generating employment. Third, freedom of trade unions, as members of civil society, was vital if they were to play a major role in those global processes. In conclusion, he noted the importance of previous initiatives, including the United Nations Millennium Declaration of 2000, in establishing a clear link between fighting poverty, job creation and sustainable development, thereby establishing a platform on which the current Assembly could build.

Mr. Kailembo said that workers had a clear stake in matters of sustainable development, because environmental, social and economic forces all had a bearing on the employment, welfare and health of workers. In Africa, as in many other parts of the world, the unsustainable exploitation of resources was giving rise to a number of problems that were detrimental to livelihoods and to social well-being, including air pollution, climate change and inadequate solid management. Working conditions, for example in export processing zones, were often unhealthy and poorly regulated. It was vital, therefore, that employers and workers should cooperate through collective bargaining to express their mutual interest in long-term sustainable development.

Mr. Kibwana welcomed the participants on behalf of the Government of Kenya and said that he saw the connection between labour and the environment as a means to combat poverty and raise living standards. Neglect of environmental concerns by business might reduce costs in the short term, but was damaging in the medium and long term, and often had harmful effects on workers. In many developing countries, activities jeopardizing environmental resources were carried out for some time before their damaging effects became apparent. It was the responsibility of all, including trade unions, to advocate more sensitive methods of using nature capital. He stressed that, in order to protect the environment in the long term, it was

necessary to protect jobs, while environmental rehabilitation itself offered great potential for job creation.

## II. Organization of the meeting

### A. Attendance

The meeting was attended by representatives of the following member States of the United Nations: Angola, Argentina, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kenya, Saudi Arabia, Serbia and Montenegro, Spain, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

Representatives of the following international organizations attended the meeting: ILO, World Meteorological Organization (WMO), WHO, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNEP and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).

Representatives of the following trade unions, trade union organizations, non-governmental organizations and other civil society institutions attended the meeting:

American Centre for International Labour Solidarity (ACILS)	Environment Liaison Centre International, Kenya (ELCI)
Apollo Alliance, United States of America	European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)
Bangladesh Mukta Shamik Union (BMSF)	Fédération Générale du Travail de Belgique (FGTB)
Canadian Autoworkers Union (CAW)	Federation of Korean Trade Unions (FKTU)
Central de Trabajadores Rerum Novarum, Costa Rica (CTRM)	Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine (FPU)
Central Organization of Trade Unions, Kenya (COTU)	Fonds de Solidarité FTQ, Canada
Central Única dos Trabalhadores, Brasil (CUT)	Fonds d'investissement en développement durable (FIDD), Canada
Central Unitaria de Trabajadores, Chile (CUT)	Força Sindical, Brazil (FS)
Comisiones Obreras, Spain (CCOO)	Ghana Trade Union Congress (GTUC)
Community, Training Research and Development, Kenya (COTRAD)	Green Belt Movement, Kenya
Confederación General del Trabajo de la Republica de Argentina (CGTRA)	Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC)
Confederación Unitaria de Trabajadores, Honduras (CUTH)	Industrial Promotion Services East Africa, Kenya
Confédération Européenne des Syndicats, Belgium (CES)	Industriegewerkschaft Bauen-Agrar-Umwelt, Germany (IGBAU)
Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail (CFDT)	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU)
Confédération Générale des Travailleurs, France (CGT)	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions – African Regional Organization (ICFTU-AFRO)
Confédération Nationale des Travailleurs du Sénégal (CNTS)	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions – Asian and Pacific Regional Organization (ICFTU-APRO)
Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria (KNSB/CITUB)	International Labour Foundation for Sustainable Development (Sustainlabour)
Confederation of Mongolian Trade Unions (CMTU)	International Organization of Employers (IOE)
Confédération Syndicale des Travailleurs du Cameroun (CSTC)	International Peace Commission, Pakistan
Confédération Syndicale des Travailleurs du Mali (CSTM)	International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation, United States of America (ITGLWF)
Confédération Syndicale du Congo	International Transport Workers Federation, Kenya (ITWF)
Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro (CGIL)	Jamii Ya Kupatanisha, Uganda (JYAK)
Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori (CISL)	Japanese Trade Union Confederation (JTUC-RENGO)
Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU)	Landsorganisasjonen i Norge (LO-Norway)
Cornell University, Global Labour Institute, United States of America	Madaraka Party of Kenya
Democratic Organization of African Workers Trade Unions, South Africa (DOAWTU)	Malaysian Trade Union Congress (MTUC)
Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (DGB)	Maoni Network, Kenya
	Mauritius Trade Union Congress (MTUC)
	Mazingira Institute, Kenya
	Mount Kenya Youth Initiative for Ecosystem Restoration
	New Zealand Council of Trade Unions (NZCTU)

Nigerian Labour Congress: National Union of  
Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NLC)  
Occupational Health, Safety and Environment  
Institute, Thailand (OHSEI)  
Organización Interamericana de Trabajadores (ORIT)  
Pakistan Workers Federation  
Plenario Intersindical de Trabajadores - Convención  
Nacional de Trabajadores, Uruguay (PITCNT)  
Pomona College, United States of America  
Public Services International, Canada (PSI)  
Soroptimist International, Kenya  
Stiftung Soziale Gesellschaft-Nachhaltige  
Entwicklung, Germany (SSGNE)  
Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees  
(TCO)  
Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO-Sweden)  
Syndex, France  
Syndicat Autonome des Travailleurs de la SDE,  
Senegal (SAT-SDE)  
Tanzania Plantation and Agricultural Workers Union

Trade Union Advisory Committee to OECD, France  
(TUAC)  
Trade Union Congress of Tanzania (TUCTA)  
Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUPC)  
União Nacional Dos Trabalhadores Angolanos –  
Confederacao Sindical, Angola (UNTA)  
Union Nationale des Syndicats des Travailleurs du  
Bénin (UNSTB)  
Union Network International (UNI)  
Unione Italiana del Lavoratori (UIL)  
United Steelworkers of America (USW)  
Union des Syndicats des Ouvriers et Employés de  
Nouvelle Calédonie (USOENC)  
Varda Group, Spain  
World Confederation of Labour (WCL)  
World Federation of Public Health Associations  
World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)  
Zambia Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU)  
Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions  
(ZCTU)

A complete list of participants was posted on the Assembly website at [www.will2006.org](http://www.will2006.org) and has been circulated as an information document.

## **B. Officers of the meeting**

The work of the Assembly was coordinated by a Steering Committee and an Organizing Committee, which had been established in preparation for the meeting.

The following served as members of the Steering Committee: Mr. Victor Baez, Interamerican Regional Organization of Workers (ORIT), represented by Mr. Iván Gonzalez; Mr. Joël Decaillon, European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC); Mr. John Evans, Trade Union Advisory Committee to OECD (TUAC); Mr. Andrew Kailembo, International Confederation of Free Trade Unions-African Regional Organization (ICFTU-AFRO); Mr. Temistocles Marcelos, Central Unica dos Trabalhadores (CUT Brazil); Mr. Joaquín Nieto, Sustainlabour; Mr. Bheki Ntshalintshali, Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU); Mr. Govindasamy Rajasekaran, International Confederation of Free Trade Unions – Asian and Pacific Regional Organization (ICFTU-APRO); Mr. Guy Ryder, International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU); Mr. Willy Thys, World Confederation of Labour (WCL); and Mr. James Ross Wilson, New Zealand Council of Trade Unions (NZCTU).

The following served as members of the Organizing Committee: Ms. Judith Carreras, Sustainlabour; Mr. Winston Gereluk, International Public Services; Ms. Laura Martin, Sustainlabour; Mr. Remi Parmentier, Varda Group; Ms. Annabella Rosenberg, Trade Union Advisory Committee to OECD, Mr. Lucien Royer, ICFTU, and Mr. Alex Garcia Wylie, Varda Group.

The plenary sessions were chaired, as indicated in the relevant sections below, by Ms. Cristina Boelcke, Division of Policy Development and Law, UNEP; Mr. Arab Hoballah, Division of Technology, Industry and Economics, UNEP; Mr. George Muchai, Central Organization of Trade Unions, COTU; Ms. Lene Olsen, Bureau for Workers' Activities, International Labour Organization (ILO/ACTRAV); Mr. Kilaparti Ramakrishna, Division of Policy Development and Law, UNEP; Mr. Lucien Royer, TUAC; and Mr. Willy Thys, WCL.

## **C. Adoption of the programme of work of the Assembly**

At the opening session, the Assembly adopted the programme of work for the meeting, as set out in annex I to the present report.

## **D. Organization of work**

Mr. Nieto outlined the process by which the Assembly would develop and adopt its final outcome. That would take the form of a resolution containing a set of recommendations to be considered by the Assembly and would be based on a working document which had been prepared by the Organizing Committee and reviewed and endorsed by the Steering Committee. Mr. John Evans (TUAC) had been entrusted with drafting the version to be presented to the Assembly: that version would incorporate further suggestions to be made by working groups during the course of the meeting.

The draft resolution, as amended, would be considered at the final plenary session of the Assembly. The recommendations approved by the Assembly would be reflected therein.

It was agreed that the Assembly would meet both in plenary and in thematic working groups. Five working groups were established to focus on the following specific issues, as they related to the outcome of the meeting:

- Climate change and energy policies;
- Chemical risks: hazardous substances in the workplace;
- Trade union actions for equal and sustainable access to resources and services, e.g. access to water;
- Corporate social responsibility and accountability; and
- Occupational, environmental and public health: asbestos and HIV/AIDS campaigns.

As discussions in those working groups would take place in English without interpretation, two additional working groups were set up to hold discussions in French and Spanish on all the working group issues.

### **III. Labour and environment for sustainable development**

At its 1st plenary session, on the morning of Sunday, 15 January, the Assembly discussed the issue of labour and environment for sustainable development. The session was chaired by Mr. Hoballah of UNEP.

#### **A. Introduction**

Mr. Hoballah introduced the item, noting that promoting sustainable development was a challenge for Governments that necessitated a sharing of responsibilities among multiple stakeholders. In that context, trade unions would play a critical role in effecting change to unsustainable production patterns. Improved global flows of information had raised the profile of issues such as the environment, health and safety but more efforts would be needed to mainstream sustainable development. Information and capacity building would be vital and UNEP could provide support in that regard, as well as through the development of legal tools and frameworks. UNEP had commissioned a study of the role of trade unions in sustainable consumption; copies of that study were available to participants.

#### **B. Presentations**

##### **1. Integration of environment into trade union action**

Mr. Ryder, General Secretary of ICFTU, said that, although the importance of environmental protection in trade union activity was increasingly recognized by union representatives, much needed to be done to cement the place of environmental protection in trade union activity. Noting the importance of building partnerships between the international trade union movement and international bodies such as UNEP, ILO and WHO, he said that, in 2006, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and the World Confederation of Labour were to be succeeded by a new international trade union organization; it was hoped that the change would be accompanied by a shift towards a greater sense of trade union internationalism, where the environmental pillar of sustainable development would play a greater role.

Although the sustainable development principles outlined in Rio provided a useful framework for integrating environment into trade union activities, environmental protection policies could have negative consequences on employment in the short term, diminishing the sympathy of workers towards environmental issues. The concept of a just transition to sustainable production and consumption had to be at the core of any attempts to integrate environmental issues into trade union concerns. Outlining the findings of recent case studies on trade union activity in the area of environmental protection, he observed that trade unions should make the environment a focus of collective bargaining.

##### **2. Trade union and worker participation in the workplace**

Mr. Nieto, President of Sustainlabour, highlighted the importance of worker participation in attempts to achieve environmental protection and noted that social participation was key to democracy, justice and sustainability. Drawing particular attention to the need to change the ways in which chemicals were handled in order to protect workers and the environment alike, he observed that adjustments to energy production and agriculture would necessitate changes in employment; efforts should be made to soften the adverse effects of such changes. Trade unions could play a valuable role in

winning grassroots consensus on such issues, and had become steadily more involved in environmental discussions since 1992, despite the opposition of companies to see workers' rights extended.

Trade union involvement needed to take place at both the international and national levels. For that participation to be most effective, there was a need for capacity-building in trade unions to develop technical knowledge on environmental issues. One mechanism for increasing trade union understanding and involvement could be the election of environmental officers to help guarantee environmental standards in the workplace. More generally, there was a need to share expertise among all stakeholders, including international bodies, Government, firms and non-governmental organizations.

### **3. Labour and the environment**

Ms. Hilary French, Special Advisor to UNEP, provided a brief outline of the environmental community's perspective on the link between labour and the environment. Stressing the extent of the threat currently facing the global environment and, correspondingly, the world economy and workers, she said that pollution and natural disasters associated with climate change had been hugely costly over recent years.

The negative effects of environmental protection measures on job numbers were minor, she said, compared with the employment opportunities they offered. Employment in industries such as wind turbine manufacture and recycling had soared over recent years. The environmental and labour communities had shared interests and the trade union movement would be a strong ally to environmentalists, both through its ability to influence working practice and its technical knowledge and expertise of environmental issues at ground level. Working together, the two lobbies could help create sustainable jobs.

### **C. Discussion**

In the ensuing discussion, one representative stressed the need to remain mindful of the impact of globalization. He noted, in particular, that despite increasing awareness among the trade union movement of environmental issues, there was a trend towards ever greater environmental destruction. Further points were raised relating to: the linkages between labour, the environment and human settlements, in particular through the process of urbanization; the growing links between environmentalists and trade unions and the need for sustained dialogue; the need for increased capacity among trade unions to engage in often complex technical matters and how UNEP could help in that regard; the difficulties of ensuring that environmental issues were given prominence when individuals faced severe poverty or loss of employment; the need to bear in mind the impact of the issues on women and children; the core role of peace and democracy as preconditions for sustainable development; and the tensions between protection of employment and of the environment.

In response to observations, Mr. Ryder said that, as workers were primarily concerned with job security and wages, there was a need to make environmental issues relevant to them. Mr. Nieto stressed the importance of increasing trade union capacity to deal with environmental issues and Ms. French noted that UNEP was already engaged in work aimed at protecting women and children, adding that further capacity-building efforts could be conducted through the six UNEP regional offices.

Summarizing the discussion, Mr. Hoballah noted that emphasis had been placed on the need for partnerships, internationalism, consensus, choice, national frameworks, participation and collective negotiations, and on the need for workers to serve as local actors. Participants had also stressed the need to change production patterns relating to agriculture and chemicals, to develop alternative systems to promote workers' rights. Trade unions and the United Nations agencies needed to improve their understanding of each others' priorities and seek to develop greater synergies and complementarities between activities relating to the environment and those carried out by unions. In that regard, United Nations agencies, he said, should take steps to improve relations among themselves.

## **IV. Preliminary consideration of issues to be discussed by the working groups**

At its 2nd plenary session, on the afternoon of Sunday, 15 January, the Assembly commenced its initial consideration of the issues to be discussed by the thematic working groups. The session was chaired by Ms. Lene Olsen, ILO/ACTRAV.

## **A. Presentations and case studies**

### **Climate change and energy policies**

In his presentation, Mr. Marcelos, Central Única dos Trabalhadores – Brasil, said that the issue of climate change was relevant to workers as well as to environmentalists. Recalling that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change recognized that the climate system was a shared resource whose stability could be affected by industrial and other emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases and that the Convention obliged Governments to take action to limit greenhouse gas emissions, he outlined the development of the Kyoto Protocol and the need for that instrument. As prevailing levels of greenhouse gas emissions were unsustainable, particularly for developing countries, country-by-country criteria should be developed for meeting the conditions of the Climate Change Convention.

Mr. Werner Schneider, Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (DBG), made a presentation on his organization's Alliance for Work and the Environment. The programme had been developed in 1998 to create employment, lower heating bills and lessen Germany's dependence on oil imports through the integration of energy saving measures into existing buildings. By introducing such measures, households could reduce energy use and carbon dioxide emissions by 80 per cent, leading to even bigger cost savings. Besides the range of jobs created directly by the programme, technical innovations were leading to new markets, thereby offering employment opportunities. German Government funding of the building modernization programme had increased to \$1.8 billion per year, and further support to the initiative would come from a new European Union directive targeting energy efficiency in buildings. Such efforts would serve as a vital component of European countries' efforts to meet the targets set out in the Kyoto Protocol for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, which very few were currently on course to achieve.

### **Chemical risks: hazardous substances in the workplace**

In her presentation, Ms. Estefania Blount, Comisiones Obreras (CCOO), Spain, noted that there were chemicals in all workplaces and that those chemicals were not only destroying the environment but had adverse effects on human health: over 400,000 workers worldwide died each year because of exposure to chemicals. Strong regulations were needed to curb the use of hazardous substances, as well as instruments for measuring compliance and the total accountability of industries. Trade unions needed to be proactive in identifying problems and to be part of the solution; and had the responsibility of articulating labour rights – the right to know and the right to participate. In addition, they should stimulate research and development for cleaner production. In order for trade unions to act, however, they needed an adequate framework. Although much remained to be done in that regard, opportunities already existed, including the strategic approach to integrated chemicals management (SAICM).

Mr. Yahya Msangi, International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers Associations (IUF) presented a case study on the Global Pesticides Project, pointing out that the project was an initiative between the Swedish Agricultural Workers' Union, agricultural unions in Ghana, Malawi, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe and IUF. It was primarily aimed at: identifying and phasing out the most hazardous pesticides; protecting workers' health, particularly vulnerable groups such as pregnant women, spray teams and the elderly; and environmental protection. One of the outcomes of the project was increased awareness among agricultural workers, particularly with regard to the impact of pesticides on health and the environment. More cases of chemical poisoning were now being reported to the national authorities and national legislation had been reviewed with the participation of workers. There was also increased recognition of unions and workers at national and international forums.

### **Trade union actions for equal and sustainable access to resources and services**

In his presentation, Mr. David Boys, Public Services International (PSI), said that there was a need to ask Governments why they allowed multinational companies to cause damage to the environment in their rush to exploit natural resources; competition was no longer acceptable as an excuse. It was the responsibility of Governments to ensure that core services, such as water, health and education, were consistently available to all, regardless of ability to pay. Claims that the private sector was more efficient at delivering such services did not bear up to empirical scrutiny. The greatest problem with public provision of services occurred when officials sought personal enrichment from involvement. That needed to be addressed but, equally, all public sector workers should be decently remunerated.

Mr. Boys observed that, although access to clean water was crucial to life, too many Governments failed to invest enough in the sector. It was unfortunate that profiteers continued to use the resources at their disposal to convince Governments to privatize the distribution of water. Urging trade unions to resist such efforts, he underscored the need for ILO to become involved in the water sector. In conclusion, he commended the initiative of UNEP in organizing the conference but called for the participation of major financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

Mr. Juan Carlos Cordero Reverdito, Plenario Intersindical de Trabajadores – Convención Nacional de Trabajadores (PIT-CNT), provided a brief account of trade union opposition to the privatization of water resources in Uruguay. Despite strong public opposition to moves to sell the publicly run water utilities, the Government had undertaken limited privatizations in 2000 under pressure from international financial institutions and multinationals active in the region. Consequently, many had lost access to water because of price increases, the supply had become erratic and resources were being used unsustainably. Under pressure from trade unions, the administration had held a plebiscite, which demonstrated continued opposition to private ownership of water resources and the Government had eventually agreed to return ownership to the Uruguayan people. The experience demonstrated that trade unions could play an important role in ensuring that key services remained under Government control.

### **Corporate social responsibility and accountability**

In his presentation, Mr. Kenichi Kumagai, Japanese Trade Union Confederation (JTUC-RENGO) said that it had become increasingly important for corporations, in particular multinationals, to contribute to the sustainable development of the societies in which they operated.

Mr. Kumagai drew the Assembly's attention to a resolution on the social responsibilities of business in a global economy, adopted by ICFTU at its World Congress in December 2004, which emphasized that collective bargaining constituted one of the most important tools for realizing corporate social responsibility. The resolution also warned of attempts by corporations to define their social responsibilities unilaterally; businesses had neither the capacity nor the right to define their responsibilities to society.

In Japan, although trade unions and support groups had been addressing issues of corporate social responsibility for more than a century, corporate social responsibility as currently defined had only recently become a focus. That was probably because, as globalization spread, it had started having some negative effects and several businesses had been involved in corporate scandals. Trade unions in Japan would support corporate social responsibility as long as corporations stepped up their efforts and adhered to strict legal compliance. They would strongly oppose such moves, however, if the elements of legal compliance were ignored.

Ms. Silvana Cappuccio, International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation (ITGLWF), presented a case study involving a multinational corporation operating a textile factory in Namibia, which illustrated the difficult issues that could arise from free trade agreements. She said that, while there was theoretical support for Namibia's reliance on free trade agreements because the country lacked an industrial base of its own, the reality was largely detrimental for Namibian workers and citizens, who received low wages and were subject to unfair labour conditions, poor occupational safety and health, and negative environmental consequences. In the case in question, the foreign factory owners had not installed waste water disposal technology as planned, which had resulted in contamination of the capital city's water supply. The case raised the issues of the need for clear environmental and occupational standards in order to protect workers' rights and the need for corporate and regulatory transparency. In conclusion, she said that the primacy given to free trade agreements in the international trade agenda, above environmental and social considerations, was detrimental to African development.

### **Occupational, environmental and public health**

In her presentation, Ms. Angela Lomosi, ICFTU-AFRO, emphasized the links between sustainable development and good health, noting that a clean environment led to a healthy working population. She observed that several ILO conventions dealing with occupational safety and health could be used by trade unions and others to prevent asbestos use and described the campaign by ICFTU to ban the use and commercialization of asbestos, urging trade unions to take ownership of that campaign. To that end, she called on the Assembly to adopt a resolution promoting a total ban on the use and commercialization of asbestos in Africa and globally.

On the issue of HIV/AIDS, she observed that poor environmental conditions affected HIV-positive individuals disproportionately because of their greater vulnerability to opportunistic infections such as tuberculosis. Unsanitary occupational practices also increased the risk of new HIV infections, such as among midwives who did not have access to latex gloves or among workers who had no proper procedure for the disposal of sharp objects. Describing the ICFTU HIV/AIDS campaign, she noted that its success was dependent on collective efforts among people with HIV/AIDS, Governments, employers and other civil society stakeholders, including ILO and other international groups. In closing, she urged Governments to ratify the ILO conventions on worker safety, provide compensation for disabled workers, pass legislation to protect workers from HIV/AIDS and ban the use and commercialization of asbestos.

Mr. Ng Wei Khiang, Director, Asian Workers Occupational Health, Safety and Environment Institute (OSHEL), presented a case study on the involvement of unions in local advocacy, focusing on the activities of the Asian Workers' Institute for Occupational Health, Safety and Environment in Bangkok, Thailand. Describing the situation in Asia as one with high rates of workplace accidents and fatalities, outdated workplace laws, poor regulatory enforcement and a large informal economic sector, he said that the institute's objectives were first, to strengthen local capacities in occupational health, safety and environment and corporate social responsibility, and second, to engage unions in dialogues. In a two-phase programme, the institute had already developed a toolkit on intervention and had trained groups on occupational health, safety and environmental issues; it had now moved onto the second phase of its programme, involving implementation of the toolkit among study circles that trained larger numbers of workers. The institute's model for social partnership had four actors: Governments with regulatory powers; non-governmental organizations that monitored social conditions; workers engaged in production; and employers that supplied resources. Lessons learned from the process were expected to be available in mid-2006.

## **B. Discussion**

In the ensuing debate, several representatives stressed the need for broader stakeholder involvement to ensure that new industrial or other facilities reflected social and environmental, as well as economic, priorities. An environmental impact assessment, properly implemented and acted upon, was an essential starting point, with the involvement of trade unions and other civil society organizations from the outset. The priorities of trade unions were often at odds with those of Government and private industry, however, and trade unions found it difficult to make their voices heard in local decision-making processes.

There was some discussion of the possible action that could be taken by organizations such as ILO and UNEP in instances where businesses had undertaken socially and environmentally harmful activities that clearly violated the law and there was support for the suggestion that the Assembly should adopt a strong position in that regard. A representative of ILO said that, while its multinational policy provided guidance on corporate social responsibility, it was difficult for ILO to intervene unless there was a clear breach of national regulations or unless it was approached directly.

Concern was expressed about the possible negative impacts of the push for privatization, for example in the provision of drinking water, where profit motives might undermine social responsibilities. In such instances, it was vital that trade unions should have access to sufficient data to enable them to adopt a strong position. They should also be encouraged to form strategic alliances with other organizations and become involved in a wider social and environmental agenda.

In a discussion on the impact of the global economy on workers and on the environment, it was noted that the benefits of free trade were often distributed unevenly, and that there was a need for a stronger regulatory framework to reduce negative effects on human and employment rights and on the environment, particularly in developing countries.

On the issue of climate change, concern was expressed that the introduction of mitigation measures might be delayed by the fact that, in a competitive market, some industries might choose to forgo the expense of such measures while reaping benefits from the actions of those industries that had introduced them.

The need for continuous education was considered an essential component of sustainable development. Trade unions had a major role to play in that respect, as they were represented both in the workplace and in the community, and had a large store of knowledge, based on years of research and experience, that could be disseminated. Some representatives mentioned the need for funding to support the education process, particularly for developing countries.

The health of workers was discussed, with particular reference to HIV/AIDS and asbestos. Although trade unions often had well-developed programmes and policies, they did not always have the resources to implement them, nor to engage in compensation or litigation battles in instances where industrial activities had caused severe damage to health. It was stressed that HIV/AIDS was a severe threat to gainful and safe employment, and more proactive trade union intervention in the workplace was required. There was also some discussion of the application of the prevention and precautionary principles, in particular with regard to the use of harmful substances in the workplace.

Summarizing the discussion, Ms. Olsen stressed that the issues raised should not be viewed in isolation, but as part of an integrated agenda that linked economic, social and environmental issues with sustainable development. It was important to remember that measures adopted in one area might have an impact – positive or negative – in another. Trade unions should form alliances in order to influence action, particularly at the national level, and engage in capacity-building and educational activities. In that regard, she emphasized the need for research and data collection. An important theme of the presentations and the ensuing discussions, she said, had been the need to respect the fundamental principles and rights of workers, with due regard for the conventions of ILO, UNEP and other organizations, and for national and international legislation.

## **V. Consideration of other issues**

At its 3rd plenary session, on the afternoon of Monday, 16 January, the Assembly was presented with a number of case studies on fostering trade union involvement in the environmental agenda and on protecting workers' health and environment. The session was chaired jointly by Mr. Kilaparti Ramakrishna, UNEP, and Mr. George Muchai, COTU.

### **A. Fostering trade union involvement in the environmental agenda**

In his introduction to the first part of the session, Mr. Ramakrishna said that the case study presentations provided instructive examples of what could be achieved in fostering trade union involvement in the environment agenda.

#### **Presentations**

#### **(a) REACH campaign of the European Trade Union Confederation**

Mr. Tony Musu, European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), made a presentation on the campaign by ETUC to promote a proposed European Union regulation on the registration, evaluation and authorization of chemicals (REACH), which was designed to replace existing European legislation with a single system for chemical substances. The cornerstone of the regulation was that the burden of proof lay with industry, which would have to demonstrate that registered chemicals could be used safely. ETUC had undertaken a number of initiatives to promote the new system of chemicals management, including setting up a working group to define the trade union position on the new legislation, preparing an explanatory booklet for workers and performing its own impact study. In addition, it had organized a conference in March 2005, involving a wide range of political, civil society and other stakeholders, with the objective of presenting trade union proposals for improving REACH. As a result of the REACH campaign of ETUC, workers had become major actors in the debate, and the text approved by the European Parliament met a number of key ETUC recommendations. ETUC would continue to monitor REACH to ensure that it contributed to workers' health and the sustainable management of chemicals.

#### **(b) Apollo Alliance**

Mr. Jerome Ringo, President of Apollo Alliance, a United States-based coalition of labour unions, environmentalists, community advocates and others committed to improving access to good jobs and clean energy, made a presentation on the coalition's activities. Apollo Alliance, comprised a widening range of partners with a shared vision of reducing United States dependence on imported energy, particularly oil, promoting a cleaner environment and encouraging job creation. Apollo Alliance had a 10-point plan for energy independence that was attracting considerable attention in the United States, including at the highest political levels. The Alliance had also been active at the State and local levels, with a range of initiatives, and was encouraging States to work towards making a certain percentage of their energy production renewable. It was an important aim of the Apollo Alliance to integrate labour and environmental issues.

**(c) Making environment a workers' issue**

Mr. Nick De Carlo, representing the Canadian Auto Workers Union (CAW), discussed the use of collective bargaining as a tool to provide a voice for workers on environmental issues, both in and out of the workplace. Emphasizing the need to establish and strengthen workers' right to bargain on environmental issues with employers, he said that it was necessary to challenge management's control of decision-making on environmental matters and to involve the public in campaigns to extend environmental concerns in the community. He also discussed the concept of extended producer responsibility, by which vehicles at the end of their life-cycle would be returned to the manufacturer for safe environmental disposal or recovery of useable parts, which represented an environmentally-friendly source of employment. Although that practice had been established in Europe, North American car manufacturers had continued to resist taking on the responsibility. The Canadian Auto Workers Union had tried to bring about change through public campaigns, political lobbying and direct negotiations. He concluded by expressing the belief that workers, as well as management, in the car industry should be involved in decision-making regarding the type of products to build and the environmental soundness of the production process.

**(d) Framework agreement on environment between the General Confederation of Labour and the Government of Argentina**

Mr. Abel Frutos, Confederación General de Trabajo (CGT), Argentina, presented a case study on the framework agreement on environment between the General Confederation of Labour and the Government of Argentina. He said that his Confederation believed that the incorporation of environmental clauses in collective agreements and the participation of workers in the policy process were necessary to achieve sustainable development. He defined sustainable development as encompassing better working conditions, better job opportunities, an expansion of employment and strict compliance with ILO conventions. To that end, his Confederation had formulated a national environmental agenda, signed an agreement establishing a coordinating committee with the ministries of health, labour and the environment, participated with other international workers' organizations, and disseminated information through educational material and workshops. He concluded by emphasizing that workers had to be aware of and committed to international policies on labour and the environment.

**(e) Nickel 2010 in New Caledonia: promoting social dialogue as an engine for sustainable development**

Ms. Hélène Robert, speaking on behalf of the French consultancy Syndex and the Union des Syndicats des Ouvriers et Employés de Nouvelle Calédonie (USOENC), made a presentation on the cooperation between USOENC and three international mining companies working in New Caledonia to assess the future impact of nickel production on employment and the environment. The parties had taken advantage of surplus funds during a cyclical boom in the nickel industry to assess threats and opportunities based on anticipated economic and technological trends in the mining industry up to 2010. The study focused on changes in employment, job quality, worker training needs and related impacts on the atmosphere, ocean and biodiversity. The trade union had used the findings to define its own position and to make specific policy proposals, several of which had ultimately been accepted by the Government of New Caledonia, and in so doing, had demonstrated a capacity to take into account social and environmental issues and to form relationships with non-governmental organizations. As a result, the trade union had demonstrated the need for job training to accommodate an expected 20 per cent growth in employment, argued for a better geographical balance in work allocation and identified inadequacies in environmental protection and rehabilitation. The study also established a need to apply the precautionary principle to protect New Caledonia's biodiversity and to reduce future industrial risks to the island's environment, while managing the exploitation of the island's rich nickel resources.

**(f) Development of trade union criteria for clean development mechanism and joint implementation projects**

In his presentation, Mr. Fre Maes, General Federation of Belgian Workers (FGTB), said that, as part of its commitment to a cleaner environment, the Belgian Government used the clean development mechanism and joint implementation projects under the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as tools to establish greenhouse gas reduction targets. Those flexible mechanisms allowed Belgium to purchase virtual reductions in greenhouse gases and essentially unused emissions quotas from developing countries in order to meet its own commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In formulating a tendering process for the purchase of such virtual reductions, the Government had sought input from trade unions, employer associations and non-governmental organizations. After describing the tendering process, he said that steps were taken to monitor the environmental, social and economic impacts of projects and pointed out that opportunities for improvement already existed through the implementation of existing policies. The

Belgian trade union was involved in planning the process of tendering and monitoring projects; the same procedure could be used to empower local trade unions in developing countries.

**(g) Fonds d'investissement en développement durable**

Ms. Andrée-Lise Méthot, Fonds d'investissement en développement durable (FIDD) of Canada, made a presentation on the fund, which invested in small and medium-sized enterprises that were proactive and environmentally and socially responsible. It aimed to create jobs and improve working conditions by adopting the life-cycle approach to sustainable development approved by the United Nations to support entrepreneurial initiatives. Successful projects were those that created jobs with progressive working conditions and that satisfied sustainable development criteria, including health, security, child rights, rights to association and reduced greenhouse gas emissions. While the fund expected a return on its investments, it only supported projects that demonstrated added value socially and environmentally as well as economically. External auditors and follow-up monitoring of funded initiatives worked to ensure continued compliance with those criteria after initial funding was provided. Experience had shown that a capital fund contribute to sustainable development by yielding a return on investment while making serious changes to reduce the effects of climate change and adverse consequences of globalization. In conclusion, she urged trade unions to draw on the economic clout at their disposal and to move into the field of finance to achieve truly sustainable development.

**Discussion**

In the ensuing discussion, several representatives asked how they might apply the lessons learnt in their own localities, perhaps through working with organizations such as those mentioned in the case studies. Ms. Méthot said that a United Nations task force on social aspects of life-cycle analysis was preparing a practical guide containing examples that those interested could adjust to their regional reality. It was acknowledged that some of the work described in the case studies was highly technical and requiring skills, knowledge and finance that trade unions in developing countries might struggle to replicate in the absence of capacity building and funding support.

In response, Mr. De Carlo commented that the funding base for the activities he had described was union dues, and that those involved had often had to develop their own expertise. Noting that unions in developing countries often lacked that financial base, he expressed the firm belief that there was scope for international exchange of ideas between unions. Mr. Frutos said that his union financed research and training by its own means, and the process had produced some eminent professionals. Ms. Robert said that the New Caledonia study had been financed in part by the multinational companies involved, partly because it enabled them to engage in dialogue with other stakeholders, and partly because of media pressure. She added, with regard to expertise, that the trade unions had been involved in the study from the outset and were well versed in the technical issues and able to contribute a sustainable environmental perspective. Mr. Musu said that ETUC had a technical office that brought together specialists in various fields; applying something similar at the national level might add to the technical know-how available to trade unions.

**B. Protecting workers' health and environment: initiatives from the world of work**

Introducing the issue, Mr. Muchai observed that, although the core goal of enterprise owners was to earn money, that aim was unattainable without the contribution of workers, thus creating a symbiotic relationship between the two. Indeed, high quality production required the provision of good health and environmental standards in the workplace. Noting that one issue of particular importance to developing countries was that of technological transfer, he said that, although that process offered a key means to achieve economic development, the transfer of obsolete or dangerous technologies could frequently have very negative consequences. Trade unions could have an important role in preventing that from occurring, in particular by helping ensure that all workers understood the hazards and were aware of measures to control risk. He concluded by stressing the importance of integrating consideration of the informal economy into discussions, noting that, in developing countries, informal work frequently accounted for a significant proportion of overall employment. However, workers in that sector were denied the protection of even basic employment law and rules relating to health and safety.

**Presentations**

**(a) Campaign to promote safety in the workplace and to protect the environment**

Mr. Bernard Ugbi, Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC), made a presentation on a project which aimed to promote safety in the workplace and to protect the environment by ensuring, among other things: that collective bargaining included environmental considerations; that workers received equal pay for equal work; that workers were guaranteed a safe working environment; that health and safety laws were reviewed by the Government; and that workers were aware of health and safety issues in

workplace and of environmental considerations. He said that the Nigeria Labour Congress, which represented some four million workers from both the public and the private sectors, had 29 affiliated industrial trade unions and was now reaching out to the informal sector. He noted that Nigerian workers had suffered from various health and safety hazards at their workplaces and he described the project's action plans for 2006 and beyond, which included fact-finding visits to factories; research, assessments and documentation of the types of chemicals used at workplaces; an information, education and communication campaign; capacity-building for leadership on health and safety laws and ILO standards; and stakeholder conferences on health and safety and the environment.

**(b) Campaign to combat discrimination against workers with HIV/AIDS**

Mr. Rodrigo Villalta, Central de Trabajadores Rerum Novarum (CTRN), made a presentation on his organization's anti-discrimination campaign for HIV-positive workers in Costa Rica. By forging an alliance of labour organizations, non-governmental organizations and Governments in a number of Central American countries, the project had assessed the status of HIV/AIDS in the workplace and had devised strategies to respond to the problem, which were in turn adopted by firms. A key component of the work involved promoting awareness and training of trade union leaders, who were often ill-informed. As a consequence of the campaign, there had been various positive developments; for example, labour organizations were better informed about the disease and could help ensure adequate understanding in the workplace and appropriate treatment of those affected; HIV/AIDS now figured on the agenda of participating organizations; most of the countries involved now provided HIV/AIDS testing and all had signed cooperation agreements and had defined priorities for action among organizations. In conclusion, he stressed that, for some HIV positive workers, discrimination could actually be more deadly than the disease itself.

**(c) Elimination of asbestos**

Ms. Svetla Karova, Confederation of Independent Trade Unions of Bulgaria (KNSB/CITUB), made a presentation on a project in Bulgaria to eliminate asbestos use and to harmonize domestic legislation with that of the European Union. The project had been launched in 2000 with the financial support of ILO and the Government of Germany to tackle the health problems associated with asbestos use. A national campaign had been carried out by the General Labour Inspectorate in 2000 and the problem had been discussed at the tripartite level with the participation of workers, labour organizations and the Government. The project was being conducted within the framework of a national programme for the limitation and gradual elimination of the use of asbestos materials and products. Noting the need for more information to educate workers and employers about alternatives to asbestos, she said that the expected results of the project were lower occurrence of disease; a decrease in pollution; the establishment of waste management at the company and regional levels; and an increase in worker awareness.

**(d) Quality, health and environment**

Mr. Halvor Woién, speaking on behalf of Landsorganisasjonen i Norge (LO Norway) and the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia (FNPR), made a presentation on a partnership programme launched by the two organizations to promote cleaner production in Russian industries, through the transfer of knowledge from Norway to Russia. The main objective of the programme was to improve working conditions and reduce emissions. The programme sought to convince business actors that cleaner production constituted a win-win solution; it improved the environment and reduced costs. A six-month training course had been conducted within the framework of the programme, at the end of which, the participants had presented a final project report. The participants were workers, engineers and representatives of middle management.

**(e) Exposure in the workplace to carcinogenic agents**

Ms. Carmen Mancheño, Comisiones Obreras (CCOO-Unión Sindical Madrid), introduced her organization's work in the area of exposure in the workplace to carcinogens. She noted that, in Spain, more than 3 million workers were subjected to carcinogens and that between 4 and 6 per cent of cancers in the country were attributed to the workplace, with 700 to 800 dying annually in Madrid because of such exposure. In order to improve the situation, her organization had sought to enlist the participation of workers and employers to prevent and control contact with carcinogens and to promote their substitution with non-harmful alternatives. Efforts had been made to provide educational material to union delegates on how to secure behavioural change; to promote research on the risks to workers; to gather information on risk management; and to compile a protocol for action which could be used to guide firms. Studies carried out by her organization had revealed that carcinogens were present in 44 per cent of the companies visited; the danger was particularly severe in the case of high-risk work that had been contracted out to small companies. As a result of her organization's work, 19 per cent of the

companies involved in the study had adopted alternative processes and a third were improving training and information.

**(f) Labelling for an ecological workplace**

Mr. Lars Bengtsson, Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees (TCO), gave a presentation on the development by his Confederation of a labelling system. The project had begun in the 1980s in response to workers' concerns about emissions from their computer screens and working environments generally. Although Governments and employers had been uninterested, computer manufacturers had responded positively to the establishment of emissions standards. In 1992, the labelling had been introduced and in 1995 the conditions expanded to include economic and ecological requirements, including standards for the working environment of employees involved in production. Subsequently, agreements had been reached with more than 100 companies and the labelling had been expanded to cover furniture and mobile phones. The results of the project had been positive both for those using the labelled products and for workers at the firms producing the goods in question. Moreover, there were plans to expand the labelling requirements further, to include a social dimension. The project was costless to run, as it was financed through the sale of licences to firms. Its result was a workplace evaluation tool that could help trade unions and their members in putting their demands to management.

**2. Discussion**

Responding to a query raised in the ensuing discussion, Mr. Ugbi said that the informal sector in Nigeria was large and spread throughout the country, and involved people practicing a range of different trades, such as mechanics, barbers and bankers. The Nigerian Labour Congress did the collective bargaining for contract workers in the petroleum industry, for example, and could provide information about people working in the informal sector.

In response to a query regarding the success rate of the campaign in Costa Rica to prevent discrimination against workers infected with HIV/AIDS, the representative of Uruguay said that, although it was difficult to indicate the overall success of the campaign, the campaign had definitely been successful in raising awareness of the problems in that regard. In Costa Rica, antiretroviral drugs were provided to workers, regardless of their nationality.

## **VI. Presentation of the outcomes and adoption of the recommendations of the working groups**

The discussion of the output of the working groups took place at the fourth plenary session, on the morning of Tuesday, 17 January. The session was chaired by Ms. Cristina Boelcke, UNEP.

### **A. Working group on climate change and energy policies**

The report of the working group on climate change and energy policies was presented by Ms. Sophie Dupressoir, European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC). Noting that the working group had discussed a number of proposed additions to the draft resolution, she said that greater emphasis should be placed in the document on the decision-making role of trade unions with regard to energy sources and policy; the environmental considerations of energy use, especially nuclear energy; and the effect of privatization on energy access, sources and clean use. Further consideration should be given to the effects of globalization on climate change, she said, and international instruments and policies to mitigate climate change should address unsustainable consumption levels and should be more restrictive. Organizations such as the World Trade Organization, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the IMF and the World Bank should develop programmes and regulations to address climate change, taking into account social concerns, the environment, employment and sustainable development. Trade unions were considered an important force in motivating those institutions.

After outlining a number of specific recommendations, she noted that there remained a fear among some trade unions that policies to protect the environment would lead to job losses; it was therefore important to stress that environmental objectives could be achieved without reducing employment. In conclusion, there was a need for education and awareness among workers regarding their rights and powers. Empowerment of workers would lead to better implementation of the sustainable development and environmental goals of the trade unions.

## **B. Working group on chemical risks and hazardous substances in the workplace**

Ms. Diane Heminway, United Steelworkers of America (USW), presented the group's recommendations for trade unions at the local, national and international levels and for Governments and international institutions, noting in particular that Governments should be urged to ratify ILO and other international conventions and devote additional resources to enforcing existing laws on chemical use in the workplace, including through training and substance control activities. Emphasizing the need to phase out and ban high-risk chemicals, she stressed the importance of worker involvement in decision-making on environmental issues and of placing the legal burden of proof of chemical safety on producers.

Major international groups and stakeholders, including the United Nations, were urged to provide better support to trade unions, and non-governmental organizations were advised to develop synergies with trade unions in conducting studies, sharing information, jointly releasing reports and improving communication so as to find common solutions. In conclusion, she said that trade unions should explore and expand contacts with allies at all levels and establish mechanisms for sharing information and strategies; in that regard, she suggested that an implementing committee could be established, with the responsibility of sharing information with participating institutions on future events.

## **C. Working group on trade union actions for equal and sustainable access to resources and services**

Mr. Bekhi Nshalintshali, Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), presented the report of the working group's discussions and noted that the working group on access to resources and services was of the view that the focus of the proposed text should be broadened to include, in addition to water, resources such as energy, oil and coal. Although the proposed action points were thought to be suitable, it was felt that the list could be extended to include the issue of advocacy of public management of resources, addressing in particular environmental regulations and conditions for awarding licences to companies undertaking work which entailed environmental damage.

In terms of the recommendations, the working group felt that, as the engagement of communities was vital, priority should be placed on mass education, with a focus on schools. Emphasizing the need to promote capacity-building within trade unions and the right of trade unions to participate in policy formulation, he said that unions must try to provide education through their own resources, rather than be dependent on external funding, and should forge alliances with other groups and international organizations. For their part, United Nations agencies needed to coordinate their activities and focus on improving mechanisms for social dialogue and education. In view of the scarcity of water resources in Africa, water supply and quality should remain at the core of discussions. More generally, there was a need to formulate an action plan for future activities that could be presented to UNEP.

## **D. Working group on corporate social responsibility and accountability**

Mr. Winston Gereluk, Public Services International, summarized the working group's discussions, incorporating the comments of the French-speaking working group. The working group agreed that the concept of corporate social responsibility should include principles of compliance, voluntarism, integration of the three pillars of sustainable development, job creation and community protection, globally consistent standards, horizontal and vertical application, dialogue between multiple stakeholders, and recognition that social responsibility offered benefits to companies. Use of the term "social responsibility", rather than "corporate social responsibility", was preferred, since it placed an onus on Governments, trade unions and other actors, as well as on companies.

Recommendations of the working group included a greater commitment to training and education on social responsibility, involving employers and workers; mandatory legislation on social responsibility, with a clear indication of rules that were legally enforceable. While the involvement of multi-stakeholder supervision could help limit corruption, the involvement of non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders was not a substitute for tripartite negotiation. Companies needed to commit to transparent practices, and Governments, trade unions and society had an obligation to ensure that they met their obligations. Finally, trade unions should publicize both good and bad experiences and support workers in countries where unions were weak.

## **E. Working group on occupational, environmental and public health**

Mr. Arthur Barritt, Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP), presented the report of the working group on occupational, environmental and public health. Noting that the definition of health according to WHO was intrinsically linked to the environment and sustainable development, he said that improvements in health required coordination among labour, international and non-governmental organizations and various Government ministries. New international mechanisms involving such organizations were suggested in order to improve cooperation, avoid duplication of work and prioritize the goals of sustainable development.

Occupational health had typically focused on workplace safety and occupational diseases, and there was now a growing emphasis on health promotion in the workplace environment. The recommendations of the public health working group included a broadening of the mandates of local and international labour organizations, such as ILO, to include a focus on health, as well as the inclusion of sustainable development and social concerns in health and economic plans

## **F. French-speaking working group on the five thematic areas**

Summarizing the work of the French-speaking working group, Mr. Ntone Diboti, Confédération Syndicale des Travailleurs du Cameroun (CSTC), said that the democratic principle should be further emphasized in the draft resolution. Trade unions should be encouraged to protect and strengthen the role of public authorities in sustainable development and the environment. Transfer technology and basic research for those who lacked access to resources for sustainable development was required, and there was a need for transparency in governmental access and control of information in order to monitor corporate compliance with the goals of sustainable development.

Regarding the five themes of the working group discussions, he said that, while there were certainly important linkages between climate change and energy policies, it was important to consider the two issues individually. He urged trade unions to focus on reducing stockpiles of hazardous substances and on finding chemical substitutes, noting that the precautionary principle would be an important tool in that regard. In addition, he urged them to demand that private water companies share responsibility with their Governments in order to ensure wider access to water and to raise awareness of water management and quality. Labour organizations should specify standards for social investments by companies and seek guarantees for corporate social responsibility. Governments, non-governmental organizations and trade unions should exercise some control over corporate social activities and be empowered to check the information provided by multinational corporations on those projects.

## **G. Spanish-speaking working group on the five thematic areas**

Ms. Cynthia Burgos Sanchez, Central Unitaria de Trabajadores, Chile (CUT) presented the recommendations of the Spanish-speaking working group, noting that capacity-building was regarded as a priority in several areas. In the absence of technical understanding of complex issues such as climate change or chemical hazards, trade unions would be unable to influence the debate or inform members of risks. International cooperation within the trade union movement and with other bodies would be vital to disseminating knowledge on these issues. With respect to climate change, access to national data would also be vital and would require constant monitoring.

With respect to access to services, the working group felt that it was necessary to defend public ownership of services. Capacity-building would again be valuable, as would stronger links with communities and civil society in order to monitor the activities of private enterprises and change the culture of water use. Trade unions should be involved in the supervision of corporate social activities and should strengthen links with the national authorities, with a view to stronger legislation and enforcement for environmental protection. Regarding health matters, the working group stressed the importance of developing tripartite work, especially in addressing HIV/AIDS.

## **H. Discussion**

Providing a brief summary of the concerns and recommendations common to the various working groups, Ms. Boelcke highlighted the following needs: capacity-building; strengthened links with other stakeholders; a clearing house to share knowledge and experiences; workers' participation in decision-making; a focus on legislation and enforcement, rather than voluntary commitments; adequate resources for trade union activities; and better coordination between United Nations agencies and trade unions rather than reliance on ad hoc arrangements.

She reported that discussions had taken place during the course of the meeting between UNEP and the other international agencies present, in which it had been agreed that those bodies could play an important role in capacity building and training of leaders and workers on a range of issues. Help could also be provided in promoting links between trade unions and other groups and in replicating successful case studies. It had been agreed that a representative of the trade union movement would attend the ninth special session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, to be held in Dubai in February 2006.

In the ensuing discussion, some doubts were expressed about the preference of the working group on corporate social responsibility for the use of the term “social responsibility” rather than “corporate social responsibility”. One representative noted that the former term was very widely used, whereas the alternative was sometimes employed by multinationals as a means of lowering their obligations. Another participant agreed and called for a reconsideration of that recommendation.

Some further concerns were raised. One participant observed that efforts to restrict the freedom of companies to damage the environment with impunity required trade unions to work together to define an agenda that appealed to workers and communities around the world. It was also stressed that assessments of risk in, for instance, the areas of hazardous chemicals and global warming were frequently contentious. It was necessary, therefore, for trade unions to increase their own capacity to analyse such issues, which would require additional funds.

## **VII. Perspectives on challenges to implementation**

The Assembly discussed the challenges to implementation at its fifth plenary session on the morning of Tuesday, 17 January. The session was chaired by Mr. Willy Thys.

### **A. Perspectives from Governments**

#### **1. Presentation by the Minister of the Environment of Spain**

In her presentation, Ms. Cristina Narbona, Minister of the Environment of Spain, stressed the commitment of the Government of Spain to redirecting its development model towards more socially and environmentally responsible patterns, with full worker participation. Noting that the asymmetries arising from globalization were a major global challenge, she called for true globalization of human rights in order to correct the deep inequalities in society and the damage to the environment. That would involve strengthening civil society and educating and training citizens to help them participate more actively. Companies, in turn, would need to improve their dialogue with workers through collective bargaining and to demonstrate their corporate social responsibility by going beyond the basic undertakings required by national and international legislation. Such companies could expect medium and long-term competitive advantages derived from increased consumer awareness and environment-related investments.

Governments had a key role to play in that process, establishing and enforcing appropriate legislation, with the involvement of civil society. The Government of Spain, for example, had set up an undertaking in July 2002 to work with the two largest unions in the country on a number of environmental initiatives, related to climate change and harmful emissions, with workers’ rights, education and training as major components of the process. A new bill was being introduced into Parliament in accordance with the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, to which Spain was a signatory. Also, an amendment to tax law that would help foster clean technologies was being considered.

Along with many other countries, Spain had become aware that the current model of development and growth had led to environmental degradation, unsustainable energy consumption and other problems. There was, however, reason for optimism, based on the biodiversity reserves that were still intact; the growing commitment of business to more renewable and sustainable approaches to energy, technology and water use; and the increasing cooperation between all sectors of society in working towards change, at both national and international levels. To achieve the aim of globalization of human rights, however, it was necessary for the United Nations system to function better as the indispensable and ultimate guarantor of human rights.

#### **2. Presentation by the representative of the Government of Argentina**

Mr. Guillermo Varela, representative of the Government of Argentina, affirmed Argentina’s commitment to the Millennium Development Goals and said that climate change would certainly affect workers as it would create a new reality. Social responsibilities could not be avoided; the rights of workers must be respected and cooperation on environmental issues must be backed by laws to avoid conflict. The Government of Argentina was working on ways of confronting the new world order

through a number of activities such as the incorporation of environmental considerations into all aspects of local government. It intended to make a just transition to sustainable production and consumption in workplaces, based on social justice and equity, so that workers would be able to defend their rights and would have access to the information they needed.

### **3. Comments by the Executive Director**

The Executive Director agreed with the previous speakers that information and education were very important and noted that globalization should not compromise the health and safety of workers. It was crucial to ensure that jobs were not created at the expense of the health and safety of workers.

## **B. Perspectives from regional bodies**

### **1. African Regional Organization**

Mr. Lawrence Egulu, ICFTU-AFRO, presented a summary of issues pertinent to the African region in terms of trade unions. He pointed out that sustainable development should lead to poverty eradication in a world where 1.1 billion people lived on less than \$1 a day and 2.7 billion lived on less than \$2 a day. Emphasizing that employment should be at the centre of sustainable development policies, he said that trade unions, which constituted the route to sustainable development, could not effectively contribute to sustainable development in an environment where workers' rights were violated. The ministries responsible for labour, which were currently under-funded, understaffed and underrated, should be strengthened. ICFTU-AFRO would work more closely with UNEP and the African Regional Office of ILO on environmental issues. In conclusion, he noted that there was a need to enhance the ratification and implementation of international legal instruments and cooperation between those instruments.

### **2. Inter-American Regional Organization of Workers**

Mr. Ivan González, ICFTU-ORIT, pointed out that, although Latin America had vast water resources, it was also a land of poverty and exclusion. The introduction of the neo-liberal economic model had led to the impoverishment of the population. With regard to the challenges of implementation, he said that climate change activities should be coordinated with those of trade unions. It was important to promote corporate social responsibility and to reduce the hazards posed by the improper use and dumping of chemicals in the workplace and wider environment. Water, which was a vital resource, should not be controlled by private companies. There was a need to promote HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns in companies and to ensure that the victims of HIV/AIDS were not discriminated against at the workplace. There was also a need for an environmental policy that was sensitive to the needs of workers. In conclusion, he noted that the factors that favoured implementation were political goodwill, social mobilization and social alliances. ORIT and trade unions of the region were engaged in a process of addressing environmental issues and, to that end, a regional conference to advance a regional strategy would be held in April 2006.

### **3. Regional Organization for Asia-Pacific**

Mr. Govindasamy Rajasekaran, ICFTU-APRO, presented his report on occupational health and safety within the region. He said that relevant legislation in the region was largely outdated. Accident statistics were subject to inconsistent reporting, making it difficult to gauge accurately the true number and seriousness of incidents. Although most trade unions in the region were playing a very active role in promoting environmental awareness in the workplace, ICFTU-APRO lacked the capacity to apply effectively the resolutions it had passed. The potential existed for further work in that regard: the Occupational Health, Safety and Environment Institute had been established in 2000 in Bangkok, Thailand, but needed to be strengthened and provided with additional funding.

### **4. European Trade Unions Confederation**

Mr. Joël Decaillon, ETUC, started his presentation by noting that the European Union had drafted a sustainable development strategy in 2001, which had been revised in 2005. His own organization's recent focus had been on the successful development of the Registration, Evaluation and Authorization of Chemicals (REACH) regime in the European Union, and the imposition of other legal obligations upon companies, aimed at increasing their responsibilities in areas such as biotechnologies and biogenetics. ETUC support for those measures had been controversial because some had felt that they threatened the jobs that trade unions have traditionally sought to defend. Tension also existed within the European Union in that regard, as the forces of globalization created pressure to concentrate on competitiveness, at the expense of consideration of the social and environmental aspects of sustainable development.

Efforts to strengthen participative democracy were obstructed by the fact that multinational companies frequently entered and exited countries rapidly. Multinational firms were able to communicate in real time without involving other sections of civil society, thereby excluding the latter from decision-making. In that context, fundamental rights should form a key policy element, with social and environmental rights given equal standing. Companies should be made to bear the burden of the environmental damage for which they were responsible and encouraged to adopt more sustainable agendas. Multinationals were sensitive to public opinion and there was a need for more publicity of trade union work to take advantage of that fact. Meanwhile, pressure should be maintained on the European Union to ensure that ILO and UNEP texts informed its policy decisions and that the environmental and social aspects of sustainable development were given priority.

## **C. Perspectives from major groups and observers**

### **1. American International Centre for Labour Solidarity**

Ms. Mary Ann Forbes, representing the American International Centre for Labour Solidarity, made a presentation on the perspective of women's groups in the labour movement. She read a statement prepared by the Women's Environment and Development Organization that recalled the commitment of UNEP to gender equality and environment; urged that a gender perspective be incorporated into considerations of labour, health and the environment; and expressed a desire to work with trade unions and UNEP on sustainable development. She continued with a statement from her own organization that recalled American unions' dedication to workers' safety and healthy working environments. The plight and progressive struggle of female workers in Africa was described and it was observed that their participation in trade unions had provided them with some control over their working conditions but that they needed international support to continue their efforts to improve workplace health and safety.

### **2. World Wide Fund for Nature**

Mr. Clifton Curtis, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), gave a presentation on the perspective of the non-governmental community on the discussions. He provided some examples of successful collaboration between non-governmental organizations and trade unions and said that there were significant opportunities for cooperation between non-governmental organizations and trade unions. Noting that synergies and linkages between different sectors should be developed, he said that non-governmental organizations had much to learn from trade unions in terms of communication, in particular with regard to advocacy campaigns; mechanisms should be established to ensure sustained interaction.

### **3. International Organization of Employers**

Mr. Brent Wilton, International Organization of Employers (IOE), spoke on the issue of sustainable development from the business perspective. Business had been engaged in the sustainable development debate for a long time, but such was the global diversity of business, it was difficult to gauge how successfully it had responded to the challenge. The informal sector, for example, was still largely unexplored territory. The response of business was closely related to governance, and responsible businesses were fully agreeable to factory inspection and other aspects of law enforcement, at the national and international levels. It was therefore important that Governments should be brought to account, using available international mechanisms, if they failed to fulfil their commitments.

The profit motive, he said, was of fundamental importance: sustainable development required sustainable business. To achieve that, businesses needed to feel secure, so that when they engaged in collective bargaining they were not faced with conflicting demands. It was important to encourage all civil society members, including business, to act in a more sustainable manner and to reconsider their consumption patterns. There was still much to be done in a number of areas, including conditionality and tripartite discussions, and international organizations and others needed to consider how successful they had previously been in focusing on priorities and implementing resolutions.

## **D. Discussion**

Mr. Thys, speaking as chair of the fifth plenary session, highlighted three points made in the presentations: a need for consistent policies and coordinated activities at all levels; a desire to see trade unions as full members and partners at all levels in sustainable development activities; and a refusal to accept privatization of important social goods such as water. Noting the problem of insufficient democracy in issues relating to sustainable development, he said that a more democratic global process would yield more effective environmental policies. While the forthcoming coalition of trade unions in Europe would represent an important contribution to sustainable development, there continued to be a lack of worker organization in the informal economies of developing countries. In conclusion, he said

that there was ample scope for collaborative and joint efforts between trade unions and other members of civil society.

## **VIII. Presentation and adoption of the final resolution and its recommendations**

The sixth plenary session of the Assembly was chaired by Mr. Lucien Royer (ICFTU/TUAC).

Mr. John Evans, TUAC, Rapporteur, introducing the draft resolution containing the recommendations of the Assembly, said that the three main outcomes of the meeting had been: confirmation of the support of the relevant United Nations bodies for trade unions in their efforts towards sustainable development; commitment of the trade unions to sustainable development; and commitment to necessary follow-up action. He summarized the contents of the draft resolution, and some textual amendments and additions were suggested during the ensuing debate.

The draft resolution was adopted by the Assembly, as orally amended, on the understanding that its text would be finalized by the Organizing Committee. A copy of the resolution is set out in annex II to the present report.

The Assembly agreed that Ms. Narbona, Minister of the Environment of Spain, would be invited to bring the recommendations of the Assembly to the attention of the UNEP Governing Council at its ninth special session, to be held in Dubai in February 2006.

## **IX. Other matters**

### **Situation in Zimbabwe**

During the meeting, a number of participants expressed concern about the situation in Zimbabwe, where, they said, trade union activities were severely restricted by the Government. Mr. Willy Madisha, President, Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), presented to the Assembly a draft resolution on the issue, noting that it would be important for participants to put their signatures to the document in order to maximize its impact on the Zimbabwean Government and dispel the impression that had been prepared by any single country. He suggested, as a way forward, that those national trade union centres which shared concerns about the situation in Zimbabwe could send the resolution individually to that country, thereby giving it greater force.

## **X. Closure of the meeting**

On the afternoon of Tuesday, 17 January, the Assembly heard closing statements from Mr. Willy Madisha, President, COSATU, Ms. Cristina Narbona, Minister of the Environment of Spain, and Mr. Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director of UNEP.

In his statement, Mr. Madisha said that the participants had assembled because of their common conviction that sustainable jobs and a quality livelihood for the working classes and the poor of the world were dependent on a healthy environment. He urged the participants to put into practice the knowledge they had gained at the meeting once they returned to their own countries. Many challenges lay ahead, however; the problems that had been raised would not be solved overnight, largely because the solutions required capital and because the hungry and unemployed people of the world would not be able to postpone their suffering in order to respect the environment.

In her closing remarks, Ms. Narbona expressed gratitude to the Assembly for having entrusted her with the task of presenting the Assembly's final resolution to the UNEP Governing Council at its forthcoming special session in Dubai. She said that the Assembly had provided an opportunity to learn about the situations in other countries and noted that those present at the meeting had a key role to play in the achievement of sustainable development. She pointed out that, although the European Union had been a pioneer in the campaign for sustainable development, it needed to do more. Underscoring her personal attachment to the Latin American community, she said that her Government was committed to assisting the Latin American region in any way it could and expressed the hope that Governments would be sensitive to the issues that had been highlighted at the meeting.

In his concluding statement, the Executive Director said that he had been impressed by the Assembly's concentration on tangible action. The problems of creating decent and secure jobs in the context of sustainable development remained the same, but the Assembly had produced some new ideas as to how that goal might be achieved. The planet's labour capital was diminishing and integrated action by a wide range of stakeholders was essential.

Following those statements and an exchange of courtesies, the meeting was declared closed at 3.50 p.m. on Tuesday, 17 January 2006.

## Annex I

### Programme of work

Sunday 15 January

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- 7.30 a.m. – 9.30 a.m.      **Registration**
- 10 a.m. – 11 a.m.      **Opening ceremony**
- Mr. Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
  - Mr. Jim Baker, Director, Bureau for Workers' Activities Department, International Labour Organisation (ILO/ACTRAV)
  - Ms. Maria Neira, Director, Department of Protection of the Human Environment, World Health Organization (WHO)
  - Mr. Willy Thys, World Confederation of Labour (WCL)
  - Mr. Andrew Kailembo, General Secretary, International Confederation of Free Trade Union – African Regional Organisation (ICFTU-AFRO)
  - Mr. Kivutha Kibwana, Minister of Environment of the Republic of Kenya
- 11 a.m. – 11.30 a.m.      **Election of meeting officers**
- Adoption of the programme of work of the Assembly**
- 11.30 a.m. – 1 p.m.      **1st plenary session: Labour and environment for sustainable development**
- Chaired by Mr. Arab Hoballah, Head, Sustainable Consumption and Production Branch, Division of Technology Industry and Economics, UNEP (UNEP/DTIE)
- Integration of environment into trade union action  
Mr. Guy Ryder, General Secretary, International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU)
  - Trade union and worker participation in the workplace: national, local and international environmental governance  
Mr. Joaquín Nieto, President, SustainLabour
  - Labour and the environment  
Ms. Hilary French, UNEP
- Discussion and summary by the Chair
- 3 p.m. – 6 p.m.      **2nd plenary session: Preliminary consideration of issues to be discussed by the working groups**
- Chaired by Ms. Lene Olsen, ILO/ACTRAV
- Climate change and energy policies: mitigation and adaptation measures and their labour implications  
Mr. Temistocles Marcelos, Central Unica dos Trabalhadores (CUT), Brazil
- Case study presentation:  
German Alliance for work and environment  
Mr. Werner Schneider, Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (DGB), Germany
- Chemical risks: hazardous substances in the workplace  
Ms. Estefania Blount, Comisiones Obreras (CCOO), Spain
- Case study presentation: The Global Pesticides Project (GPP): trade union work towards reduction of the use of pesticides and awareness raising  
Mr. Yahya Msangi, International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF)

- Trade union actions for equal and sustainable access to resources and services, e.g. access to water  
Mr. David Boys, Public Services International (PSI)  
Case study presentation:  
Trade union opposition to the privatization of water resources in Uruguay  
Mr. Jan Carlos Cordero, Reverdito, Plenario Intersindical de Trabajadores–Convencion Nacional de Trabajores, Uruguay
  - Corporate social responsibility and accountability  
Mr. Kenichi Kumagai, Japanese Trade Union Confederation (JTUC-RENGO), Japan  
Case study presentation:  
Textile manufacturing in Namibia  
Ms. Silvana Cappuccio, International Textile, Garment & Leather Workers' Federation (ITGLWF)
  - Occupational, environmental and public health: asbestos and HIV/AIDS campaigns  
Ms. Angela Lomosi, ICFTU-AFRO  
Case study presentation:  
Socialization: involvement of unions in advocacy at the local level  
Mr. Ng Wei Kiang, Occupational Safety, Health and Environment Institute (OHSEI), Malaysia
- Discussion and summary by the Chair

## Monday 16 January

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9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

### Working group sessions

1. Climate change and energy policies  
Facilitator: Mr. Nick de Carlo, Canadian Autoworkers Union(CAW)  
Rapporteur: Sophie Dupressoir, European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)
2. Chemical risks: hazardous substances in the workplace  
Facilitators: Mr. Tony Musu, European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), and Mr. Desta Mebratu, UNEP/Regional Office for Africa  
Rapporteur: Ms. Diane Heminway, United Steelworkers of America (USW), United States of America
3. Trade unions actions for equal and sustainable access to resources and services, e.g. access to water  
Facilitator: Mr. Tim Kasten, Division of Environmental Policy Implementation, UNEP  
Rapporteur: Bekhi Nshalintshali, Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), South Africa
4. Corporate social responsibility and accountability  
Facilitators: Winston Gerreluk, Public Service International (PSI), and Cornis van der Lugt, Division of Technology, Industry and Economics, UNEP  
Rapporteur: Kang Choong-Ho, Federation of Korean Trade Unions (FKTU), Korea
5. Occupational, environmental and public health: asbestos and HIV/AIDS campaigns  
Facilitators: Mr. Bjorn Erikson, Landsorganisasjonen i Norge (LO) Norway and Ms. Maria Neira, WHO  
Rapporteur: Arthur Barrit, Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP), Philippines
6. French-speaking working group on the five thematic areas  
Facilitator: Joël Decaillon, European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)
7. Spanish-speaking working group on the five thematic areas  
Facilitator: Iván González, Organización Interamericana de Trabajadores (ORIT)

3 p.m. – 6 p.m.

**3rd plenary session: Presentation of case studies and discussion**

Chaired by Kilaparti Ramakrishna, Deputy Director Designate, Department of Policy Development and Law, UNEP

Co-chaired by Mr. George Muchai, Central Organization of Trade Unions (COTU);

3.15 p.m. – 4.30 p.m.

**A. Fostering trade union involvement in the environmental agenda**

- Europe: REACH campaign and the European Trade Union Confederation  
Mr. Tony Mosu, REACH Campaign
- United States of America: Apollo Alliance  
Mr. Jerome Ringo, Apollo Alliance
- Canada: Making environment a workers' issue  
Mr. Nick De Carlo, Canadian Auto Workers
- Argentina: Framework agreement on environment between the Confederación General del Trabajo (CGTRA) and the Government of Argentina  
Mr. Abel Frutos, CGTRA, and Mr. Guillermo Varela, Ministry of Environment, Government of Argentina
- New Caledonia: Nickel 2010 in New Caledonia: promoting social dialogue as an engine for sustainable development  
Ms. Hélène Robert, Syndex and Union des Syndicats des Ouvriers et Employés de Nouvelle Calédonie (USOENC)
- Belgium: Development of trade union criteria for clean development mechanism and joint implementation projects  
Mr. Fre J. Maes, Fédération Générale du Travail de Belgique (FGTB), Belgium
- Canada: Fonds d'investissement en développement durable (FIDD)  
Ms. Andrée-Lise Méthot, FIDD

Discussion

4.30 p.m. – 6 p.m.

**B. Protecting workers' health and environment: initiatives from the world of work**

- Nigeria: Campaign to promote safety in the workplace and to protect the environment  
Mr. Bernard Ugbi, Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC)
- Costa Rica and Uruguay: Campaign to combat discrimination against workers with HIV/AIDS  
Mr. Rodrigo Villalta and Mr. Juan Carlos Cordero Reverdito, Central de Trabajadores Rerum Novarum (CTR) and Plenario Intersindical de Trabajadores–Convención Nacional de Trabajadores (PIT-CNT)
- Bulgaria: Elimination of asbestos and harmonization of domestic legislation to European Union standards.  
Ms. Svetla Karova, Confederation of Independent Trade Unions of Bulgaria (KNSB/CITUB)
- Norway and Russia: Quality, health and environment (QHE). A program for cleaner production and OSHE in Russian Industries  
Mr. Halvor Woien, Landsorganisasjonen i Norge (LO), Norway, and Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia (FNPR)
- Spain: Labour exposure to carcinogenic agents  
Ms. Carmen Mancheño, Comisiones Obreras (CCOO-Unión Sindical Madrid)
- Sweden: TCO labelling for an ecological workplace: emissions, energy, ecology and ergonomics  
Mr. Lars Begtsson, Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees (TCO)

**Tuesday 17 January**

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- 9 a.m. – 10.30 a.m.      **4th plenary session: Presentation of the outcomes and adoption of the recommendations of the working groups**  
Chaired by Ms. Cristina Boelcke, Director, UNEP/DPDL  
Discussion and summary from the Chair
- 10.30 a.m. – noon      **5th plenary session: Perspectives on challenges to implementation**  
Chaired by Mr. Willy Thys, World Confederation of Labour (WLC)
- A. Perspectives from Governments**
- Presentation by Ms. Cristina Narbona, Minister of Environment of Spain on “Labour and the Environment for Sustainable Development”
  - Presentation by Mr. Guillermo Varela, representative of the Government of Argentina
- B. Perspectives from regional bodies**
- African Regional Organization (ICFTU-AFRO), Mr. Lawrence Egulu
  - Inter-American Regional Organization of Workers (ORIT), Mr. Iván González
  - Regional Organization for Asia Pacific (ICFTU-APRO), Mr. Govindasamy Rajasakaran
  - European Trade Unions Confederation (ETUC), Mr. Joël Decaillon
- C. Perspectives from major groups and observers**
- Women’s groups: Ms. Mary Ann Forbes, American International Centre for Labour Solidarity
  - Non-governmental organizations: Mr. Clifton Curtis, World Wide Fund for Nature
  - Business: Mr. Brent Wilton, International Employers’ Organization
- Summary by the Chair
- 2 p.m. – 3 p.m.      **6th plenary session: Presentation of the common framework for action and final recommendations**  
Chaired by Mr. Lucien Royer, ICFTU/TUAC  
Presentation by Mr. John Evans, Trade Union Advisory Committee to OECD
- 3 p.m. – 3.30 p.m.      **Closure of the meeting**
- Mr. Willy Madisha, President, COSATU
  - Ms. Cristina Narbona, Minister of Environment of Spain
  - Mr. Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director, UNEP

## Annex II

### Resolution adopted by the Trade Union Assembly at its first meeting

1. The Assembly *agreed* on the following objectives:
  - (a) To strengthen the link between poverty reduction, environmental protection and decent work. Decent and secure jobs are essential for people to have a sustainable livelihood. Creating decent and secure jobs is only possible, however, if environmental sustainability is attained: hence the need to embrace the poverty reduction and sustainable development goals contained in the Millennium Declaration and Johannesburg Plan of Implementation through the promotion of decent employment and environmental responsibility. This must also include the mainstreaming of gender issues;
  - (b) To integrate the environmental and social dimensions of sustainable development with a rights-based approach. Fundamental rights of workers such as freedom of association and collective bargaining must be respected if workers and their unions are to be able to engage in strategies for sustainable development. Moreover, human rights must include the universal, equitable, egalitarian and environmentally sound access to basic resources such as water and energy;
  - (c) To establish effective and democratic governance to ensure sustainable development and, to that end, to reinforce the role of national public authorities, to establish the rules necessary to govern global markets and firms and to ensure both the compliance of business with law and regulations and also their wider accountability and responsibility, with a view to achieving the goals of sustainable development;
  - (d) To take urgent action on climate change in support of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol; to develop new and additional agreements for both developed and developing countries, taking account of common but differentiated responsibilities; to anticipate and minimize the negative effects and maximize the positive effects on employment of mitigation; and to ensure the participation of trade unions in decision-making on climate change strategies;
  - (e) To implement the Johannesburg goals on chemicals to make industry prove that chemicals used are safe for workers, consumers, communities and the environment; in the context of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, to ensure the substitution of the most dangerous substances; and to ensure concerted global action through the adoption of the Strategic Approach to Chemicals Management and its follow-up, and, in addition to promote the finalization and implementation of the European Union regulatory framework for the registration, evaluation and authorization of chemicals, to be known as the REACH system;
  - (f) To promote sustainable production and consumption patterns through the reinforcement of cleaner production centres and the dissemination and transfer of technology;
  - (g) To introduce policies for just employment transition as a central feature of environmental protection and to ensure that workers negatively affected by changes are provided with safe and decent employment alternatives;
  - (h) To enhance the dialogue between labour and management, consultation and negotiation in the workplace on sustainable development, and social dialogue at the sectoral, national and international levels in both public and private sectors, to use appropriate tools to increase social and environmental responsibility and accountability of enterprises through both trade union and multi-stakeholder participation in genuine initiatives and to ensure that corporate social responsibility involves both compliance with law and voluntary initiatives;
  - (i) To enhance cooperation and coherence between international rules and conventions on environment and sustainable development. This is to be achieved through strengthened cooperation between the United Nations Environment Programme, the International Labour Organization, the World Health Organization and related environment, social, labour and health ministries;
  - (j) To link occupational health to environmental and public health policy and practice; while raising standards of occupational health and safety as an objective in its own right, to reinforce the International Labour Organization conventions and programmes to develop and promote it; to take account of the need for differentiated approaches between developed and developing countries; to use this as a central element of campaigns to fight HIV/AIDS; to prevent worker death, injury and illness from the effects of chemicals or dangerous substances, such as asbestos; and to ensure the right to reproductive health for women and men;

2. To achieve these objectives, the trade union representatives at the Assembly commit themselves to strengthening trade union action on sustainable development and to working:

(a) For the reform of government policies and practice, in particular by facilitating the transition to sustainable production and consumption in workplaces and the introduction of workers' environmental rights and participation;

(b) For the ratification and implementation of key conventions and instruments covering both the environment and the relevant International Labour Organization conventions, while promoting employment and social policies to make decent employment a key part of environmental protection, sustainable development and poverty eradication;

(c) For the development of capacity-building and training programmes to advance integration of the social economic and environmental pillars of sustainable development, including integrated implementation of the principles of the United Nations Global Compact, recognizing the particular importance of the protection of women;

(d) For the assessment, planning, implementation and monitoring of initiatives for environmentally safe and sustainable production and consumption, and also for the transfer of clean technology and development of technology assessment at the sectoral level;

(e) For the more effective application of tools to promote the social and environmental responsibilities of business, including agreed public instruments such as the OECD Guidelines on Multinational Enterprises, the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles Concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, as well as, where appropriate, private initiatives such as sustainability reporting through the Global Reporting Initiative, and, where such systems exist, the use of workers' capital in pension funds;

(f) For the application at the global level of proposals contained in the European Union REACH programme on chemicals to regulate, within the context of the precautionary principle, the responsibility and liability of producers to trace and detect dangerous chemical substances;

(g) For the negotiation of global framework agreements with companies that incorporate environmental and sustainable development commitments and, where relevant, for the strengthening of the information rights of works councils;

(h) For the monitoring of Governments' investment and procurement practices and regulation, privatization and land-use policies, so as both to integrate social and environmental objectives and to ensure human rights and equity with respect to access to resources such as water and energy;

(i) For endeavours, mounted together with civil society allies, to encourage workplace and community action and awareness-raising among the members of trade unions, for example, through dialogue with community stakeholders and with the involvement of Agenda 21 major groups in decision-making;

(j) For effective prevention and responses to natural and industrial disasters with appropriate environmental legal responsibility;

(k) For a complete global ban on asbestos use, for its safe handling and disposal in accordance with the decisions of the Parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal and for its inclusion in the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, and also for the promotion of integrated and workplace-based approaches to fighting HIV/AIDS.

3. The trade union representatives at the Assembly further commit themselves to working for increased trade union awareness at all levels on these issues in their own organizations worldwide, with a view to the adoption of policy and implementation plans for local, national and international action on the outcomes of this Assembly and to integrate this work at the sectoral level. They recommend that this global assembly is followed up regionally in Latin America, Africa and Asia.

4. The trade union representatives welcome the common platform between the United Nations Environment Programme, the International Labour Organization and the World Health Organization. The three organizations will explore the following opportunities for further action, as a follow-up to the Trade Union Assembly on Labour and the Environment:

- (a) To undertake capacity-building and training, and the development of joint training materials for trade union leaders and workers in the following areas:
- (i) Climate change mitigation and adaptation: adaptation measures and their impacts on employment and workers' health;
  - (ii) Sustainable consumption and production, including environmental management systems and occupational health and safety;
  - (iii) Corporate environmental and social responsibility, as called for at the World Summit on Sustainable Development;
  - (iv) Environmental content of global social dialogue, including framework agreements;
  - (v) Awareness and preparedness for emergencies at the local level including disaster management;
  - (vi) Multilateral environmental agreements and law: improved awareness and understanding of their applicability to the workplace;
  - (vii) Sound management of chemicals, including through evolving and newly adopted treaties or agreements, of industrial chemicals and of pesticides and enhancing the role of trade unions and workers in the implementation of the strategic approach for international chemicals management, the European Union REACH system and other programmes; and revitalizing the UNEP-ILO-WHO memorandum of understanding on the safe use of chemicals;
- (b) To facilitate the engagement of the labour movement with public authorities, for example, in public services delivery;
- (c) To replicate the successful case studies presented at the Assembly and, to that end, to create and maintain a website to collect the case studies and to consider their possible publication;<sup>1</sup>
- (d) To promote the engagement of trade unions with other major groups, including multi-stakeholder dialogue to address the sustainable development agenda;
- (e) To undertake a study on the incorporation of just employment into environment policy design;
- (f) To promote environmentally and socially responsible job growth;
- (g) Jointly to review implementation of agreements on a regular basis;
- (h) To provide a model for joint, integrated planning among the different sectors, such as the Health and Environment Linkages Initiatives of the World Health Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme;
- (i) To invite the World Health Organization to present a global action plan on occupation health to the World Health Assembly in 2007, with contributions from the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme;
- (j) To provide an analysis of the health aspects of the transition to sustainable production, including the health consequences of changes in the employment situation.

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<sup>1</sup> It is noted that WHO can make all its publications available, either on its website or in hard copy, or both.