

ILC 2012
Keth Thapper, Worker Delegate of Sweden

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Mr President!

My intervention is on behalf of my organisation, the Swedish Trade Union Confederation and also of the Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees.

First of all we want to express our deep appreciation for the work of the Director General, Mr. Juan Somavia, over more than 13 years.

Many things can be mentioned but allow me to mention just two things, the Decent Work Agenda and the Global Jobs Pact, both fundamental in putting ILO on the global arena as a key actor.

Many workers in the world are paying a high price as a result of the economic and financial crisis since 2008.

The unemployment figures are rising and especially among young people.

The crisis is linked to low trust and confidence. The austerity measures are often linked to attacks on workers' rights and restrictions of the trade unions' functioning. This is not a way to restore trust. We are convinced that it will instead lead to clashes and unrest, something very negative, in a time when all forces are needed to create jobs, decent jobs and sustainable jobs.

We need investments in education and training, we need investments in infrastructure. We need real wage lifts to restore demand in the economy. Workers and the unemployed cannot starve themselves out of the crisis. That is a dead end!

In my country, Sweden, the unemployment rate is nearly 8 percent and a lot higher among young people.

And adding to these figures we hear suggestions from employers and from some right wing politicians to reduce salaries for young people, thus reducing them to secondary citizens.

This is an inhumane policy, it is not solving the unemployment crisis, and it is not acceptable for us in the trade unions.

Globalisation boosts economic growth. It helps millions of workers to raise their incomes. But the fruits of globalisation are not equally shared. Income inequalities are growing and in many countries globalisation is used as an argument to attack workers' rights, to continue with poor labour standards and to keep wages down. The main winners of the globalisation so far are the companies, the investors and the risk capitalists.

Mr President!

My organisation, the Swedish Trade Union Confederation just celebrated our congress ten days ago and on Palestine the Congress decided to continue our support for the Palestinian workers.

We demand the end of the Israeli occupation and we want to see a two state solution with a free, democratic Palestine, with full workers' rights.

Thank you.