Report of the 1st IBSA Conference of Labour Ministers

Introduction

1. The 1st IBSA International Conference on South-South Cooperation “Innovations in Public Employment Programmes & Sustainable Inclusive Growth” was held in New Delhi, India from 1 to 3 March 2012. The Conference was hosted by the Government of India with the support of the International Labour Office.

Opening ceremony

2. The Secretary of Labour and Employment from the Government of India, Dr. Mrutyunjay Sarangi welcomed the dignitaries to this International Conference on South-South Cooperation on Innovations in Public Employment Programmes (PEP) and Inclusive Growth. He began by noting that the world was facing a crisis of slow growth and poor recovery in employment. Referring to ILO’s work, the Secretary informed the conference that global unemployment stood at over 200 million, with youth particularly hard hit. He noted that employment had to be at the core of the response to prevent a jobless recovery. In this regard, he stressed that new jobs should be ones that stimulate demand, savings and sustainable growth. Green jobs are, thus, an important generator of development and a source of new jobs, though this will require new skills and improvements in decent work elements. To achieve this goal, the Secretary informed the delegates that ministries of labour and employment have an important role to play in identifying policies and strategies, along with employers and workers.

3. Moving to the issue of South-South cooperation, the Secretary highlighted that the last decade or so has been a period of decreasing dependence on aid programmes and a shift in the international balance power. In this regard, he noted that India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) was a major driver of South-South Cooperation (SSC).

4. Focusing on the situation in India, the Secretary outlined the innovative employment and sustainable livelihood initiatives that have been implemented in India over recent years, notably the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA), National Health Insurance Scheme (RSBY), Skills Development Initiative (SDI), and the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM). In terms of MGNREGA, he informed the delegates that this scheme was now the world’s largest
public employment programme (PEP) providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment to rural households. Nearly 50 per cent of beneficiaries have been women and the programme has also had positive impact on the conservation of natural resources.

5. The Secretary also referred to the importance of developing infrastructure and governance for industrial growth. To tackle these key areas, the Government of India has initiated a host of projects and schemes to upgrade physical infrastructure in key sectors, such as Bharat Nirman. To improve the skills level of workers, the Government of India has formulated the National Skills Development Policy with the target of skilling 500 million people by 2022. In the area of social security, he outlined efforts of the Government of India, notably the Unorganised Workers’ Social Security Act of 2008 and the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima and Yojana (RSBY), which provides health insurance coverage for below-the-poverty line families. In reference to the need for labour-intensive growth, he also stressed the importance of technology in key sectors such as food processing, leather and footwear, textiles, tourism, construction, and health.

6. In concluding, the Secretary expressed the ministry’s pleasure at the successful collaboration between the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Ministry of Rural Development, Central Board for Workers Education, and the ILO.

Keynote Address by Dr. Sachiko Yamamoto,
ILO Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific

7. Dr. Sachiko Yamamoto, ILO Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, expressed her pleasure to be at this conference and thanked the Government of India, particularly the Ministries of Labour and Employment and Rural Development, for collaborating and taking the lead on this event. With support from the ILO Office, it is a great example of promoting policy coherence on the crucial issues of employment and inclusive growth across different ministries. She acknowledged the high level presence of ministers and representatives from over 18 countries from the South and around the world.

8. Starting with the global context, the speaker recalled that, despite initial predictions, developing countries proved to be more resilient to the global financial crisis. This was due to better policymaking in terms of stimulus packages and social protection schemes, along with external factors. In general, she stressed that policymakers are better able to respond through more effective policies and programmes.

9. However, despite economic progress and a reduction of poverty, the speaker indicated that decent work deficits continue to dominate the labour market. Moreover, women, youth and other vulnerable segments of the population face permanent hurdles to access the few formal sector jobs. She highlighted the challenge of creating sufficient jobs and decent work, despite the growth in the region. She reminded that such points were stressed at the 15th Asia and Pacific Regional Meeting in Kyoto held in December 2011 and conclusions were adopted that confirmed that employment and decent work must be at the heart of economic policies.

10. Referring to the specific situation in India, the speaker pointed out that the high rates of economic growth were not accompanied by a rise in employment. Consequently,
94% of workers continue to be in unorganized sector, in precarious and unprotected jobs. On a positive note, she noted that wages for both regular and casual workers in both urban and rural areas had increased. In this context, the MGNREGA which reached over 54 million households in 2010-11, plays an important role in providing employment and lifting earnings in rural areas. Its rights-based approach to development illustrates how an employment intensive growth policy can have economic, social and environmental benefits and at the same time contribute to the livelihood security of the poor by creating a wage floor. Moreover, MGNREGA contributes to the protection of the natural resource base strengthening the resilience of communities to adapt to climate change, as the majority of works are water, land and forestry-related.

11. Moving to the issue of South-South cooperation, the speaker underlined that the purpose of this conference under the IBSA framework was to share knowledge and experiences that can help countries of the South. This can in turn help implement the Decent Work Agenda (DWA) and the Global Jobs Pact (GJP). In this context, she stressed that there has been a lot of progress since the Brasilia Declaration of June 2003. She also emphasized that South-South Cooperation (SSC) is a manifestation of solidarity among countries and peoples of the South. The speaker indicated that, in addition to the IBSA countries, the conference will be hearing of the successes and challenges in implementing public employment programmes from a range of countries including Cambodia, Ethiopia, Indonesia and Nepal.

12. Overall, SSC is guided by the IBSA Declaration signed in 2010 which firmly establishes triangular cooperation between two South-South partners and the ILO - a new modality in the ILO’s cooperation portfolio. At the same time, South-South Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) should be seen as a complement to North-South cooperation. Summarizing, the speaker pointed out that SSC is about applying local and home-grown solutions which can take different forms: sharing of good practices; knowledge transfer; technical assistance; and use of appropriate technologies.

13. Turning to future areas of support, the speaker informed the conference that ILO can assist with matching the needs of countries, particularly LDCs, with contributing nations, along with adding ILO’s own repository of knowledge and expertise to enhance technical and programmatic quality of cooperation. She also indicated that these issues will be discussed at the forthcoming ILO Governing Body meeting in March, which will deliberate on a strategy for promoting SSTC as part of its Technical Cooperation Programme.

14. In conclusion, the speaker congratulated the Government of India and expressed her wish that the meeting will identify concrete activities and areas of work for future cooperation. Finally, she stated that the ILO would be proud to be a partner in this future process.

**Keynote Address by Mr. Mallikarjun Kharge,**  
**Minister of Labour and Employment of the Government of India**

15. The Minister of Labour and Employment of the Government of India, the Honourable Mr. Mallikarjun Kharge, began by welcoming delegates to this conference, which has brought countries of the South together to shape the future of the world. In this regard, he stressed that SSC is going to be an important feature of global economic
development in the coming century. Though economies of developing countries have their inherent strengths and similarities, the Minister underscored the challenge of making the growth process not only faster but also more sustainable and inclusive.

16. In order to move towards this common shared vision, the Minister indicated the importance of the DWA in charting out a road map for this purpose. In this context, India, Brazil and South Africa signed the Declaration of Intent with the ILO in 2010 to promote decent work in all developing countries.

17. The Minister informed the conference that the common thread of such initiatives is the promotion of peace, security and social development for all. South-South cooperation will lead to the sharing of information, best practices, and development of effective technical cooperation programmes. Such initiatives will go a long way to bring developing countries together and improve their economic and social conditions. South-South Cooperation has created partnerships in the areas of technical, economic and political exchanges between these countries. United Nations agencies have been involved in such efforts; in this respect, the Minister stressed that this conference is a shining example of such collaboration.

18. Referring to the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization and the GJP, the Minister informed the conference that his Ministry has been regularly interacting with the ILO and has taken concrete actions for furthering the ILO-IBSA Declaration of Intent on Decent Work. The Ministry has shared expertise with other developing countries in such areas as labour policy, skill training and safety.

19. The Minister outlined the various initiatives of the Government of India to improve the quality of employment and extend social security to the unorganized sector. In this regard, he focused on the flagship scheme, MGNREGA, which now has an annual outlay of around US$8 billion. In addition, the enactment of the Right to Information Act has brought greater transparency and accountability. He also referred to the Right to Education Act and their current efforts towards legislating a Food Security Act. Altogether, there has been a move from scheme-based to rights-based approaches. The Minister underscored their support for the Social Protection Floor Initiative. In addition to these programmes, he shared with the conference the successes brought by the National Health Insurance Scheme (RSBY), which covers around 120 million persons and is making inroads to also cover the unorganized sector.

20. Recognizing the challenge of creating jobs for the large youth population, the National Skills Development Policy has been made a priority and a Coordinated Action Plan was framed to target 500 million skilled persons by 2022. In this context, the Minister informed delegates of a new scheme, Modular Employment Skills, and the strengthening of the labour market information system. Furthermore, the draft National Employment Policy addresses the need to create more productive, sustainable and decent employment opportunities. Overall, the Minister indicated that quality employment is the foundation of the Government of India’s vision for growth. In this respect, decent work and employment are not merely outcomes, but drivers of economic growth.

21. The Minister also informed the conference that India had survived the global slowdown with unemployment falling from 8.3 percent in 2004-05 to 6.6 percent in
2009-10. This is a major achievement and has been driven by public employment policies and various stimulus measures during the crisis.

22. In order to sustain growth in the long run, the Minister underscored the need for attaining higher levels of productivity and competitiveness and increasing employment opportunities. In this respect, economic growth and social inclusion mutually reinforce each other, as evident in the resilience of India to the global financial crisis.

23. In conclusion, the Minister outlined his wish that this conference will build capacity and facilitate the sharing of knowledge among developing countries, which will lead to a better understanding of public works programmes and employment guarantee schemes. Ultimately, innovative solutions within these holistic frameworks will lead to better cohesion and inclusive growth.

24. The Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Labour and Employment of the Government of India, Mr. A.C. Pandey thanked the Minister for his presence and contribution, and the Secretary of the Ministry of Labour and Employment, for his guidance and conceptualization of the conference. In addition, the Joint Secretary thanked the delegates from Asia, Africa and South America and ambassadors for their attendance. He expressed gratitude to the ILO for their support and co-operation in organizing this conference. He thanked the Central Board for Workers Education for supporting the conference. He also thanked other government representatives, trade unions and employers’ organizations for their participation and guidance. Finally, the Joint Secretary expressed gratitude for the untiring efforts and commitment of colleagues of the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of External Affairs and officials from the ILO.

High Level Panel Discussion for Labour Ministers
25. Mr. José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, Executive-Director for Employment of the ILO congratulated the Government of India for hosting this very important event. An appropriate location to share good practices and innovations, he said, especially since the Government of India through MGNREGA is in the forefront of developing public employment programmes. The work on employment-intensive investments in infrastructure requires leadership, great coordination, and unique combinations of regulations and institutional capabilities and he highlighted the value of sharing these innovations in the spirit of South-South Cooperation with other countries that are undertaking or designing new PEPs.

26. Despite positive GDP growth in India, he described the challenge India is facing in making growth more job-rich and inclusive. Nevertheless, the speaker commended the Government of India for demonstrating that through good policies founded on a local resource-based approach and an inclusive strategy, like the one used in MGNREGA; large-scale PEPs can have a significant impact on the livelihoods of the poorest.

27. He stressed that such programmes and policies are important not only because of fundamental values of social justice, but also for instrumental reasons: higher incomes for the poor improve their standards of living, expand the size of the domestic market, and help to rebalance the growth path. These programmes should then also be seen as
part of the rebalancing of macroeconomic and growth strategies called for by the G20. For large countries like India boosting the domestic market has strong developmental effects not only for India, but also globally.

28. In the context of MGNREGA, the speaker described the many positive impacts the programme has had in supporting the income of the poor: created predictable jobs and reduced un(der)employment; increased household income; reduced distress migration; strengthened social dialogue; increased women’s participation; increased wages and parity wages for women; contributed to local resource-based environmental activities; and increased transparency and accountability through social audits.

29. Nevertheless, he highlighted that these programmes were not lacking challenges, also recognized by the Government of India: avoiding corruption; ensuring timely payments and that decent work is provided for; strengthening skills and increasing employability; and ensuring the quality of assets. The speaker reminded that the ILO over the years has facilitated and continues to support countries in providing capacity building for both workers and institutions in the appropriate design of ongoing and new public employment programmes.

30. The speaker acknowledged the close collaboration that the ILO has enjoyed over the years in India with both the Ministry of Labour and Employment and the Ministry of Rural Development and commended them to continue their collaboration, leadership and commitment to the programme which has been an essential ingredient to its success and continuous improvement.

31. In the context of SSC, he informed the conference that the ILO is working closely with various partners to highlight innovations in PEPs, advancing ILO Convention 122, Employment Policy Convention, 1964, promoting “full, productive and freely chosen employment”. The ILO has facilitated South-South knowledge development and sharing of experiences on the design of large-scale public employment through its "Innovations in Public Employment Programmes (IPEP): Mitigating a Jobs Crisis" modular training course.

32. He confirmed that employment-intensive investment approaches to infrastructure development and service delivery have proven to be an effective instrument to increase domestic demand and create new opportunities for workers and enterprises through private sector contracting. Moreover, he explained that PEPs had proven themselves as efficient complements to private sector jobs, creating an employment floor, and that they have been strengthened in many countries as a response to the global Great Recession.

33. However, he highlighted the importance of developing PEPs with a long-term perspective in mind, to be used as a crucial policy instrument with which to tackle the problem of un(der)employment as part of wider employment and social protection policies. When properly targeted and designed, these programmes help reduce the vulnerability of the poor strata of the population and through convergence and capability approaches, are able to increase their employability and potentially lift them out of poverty.
34. The speaker summarized the key ingredients necessary for an inclusive growth strategy focused on employment: Inclusive and job-rich policies to restructure patterns of growth; policies to raise productivity, competitiveness, employment and income; targeted policies through innovative public employment schemes, employment-intensive infrastructure investments, entrepreneurship promotion, minimum social protection floor schemes and transition to formality and decent work; policies fostering a better balance between exports and domestic markets; measures that aim at a higher rate of domestic savings and investment; and greater policy coherence by mainstreaming employment impact assessments.

35. In conclusion, he expressed his great appreciation and encouraged further working together under this South-South approach to learn about the many opportunities and challenges that exist in reducing decent work deficits together and promote a more sustainable and inclusive growth path for all.

36. The Ambassador of the Government of Brazil to India conveyed the regrets of his Minister of Labour for not being able to attend this conference, but confirmed the Government of Brazil’s continued commitment to SSC for the promotion of social and economic development, and for contributing to the implementation of the DWA and its four Strategic Objectives. With the IBSA partners and by means of the SSTC, Brazil supports the efforts of other countries of the South to implement PEPs for sustainable inclusive growth, the DWA as well as the GJP and confirmed that contribution to SSC through the ILO had already reached US$ 8 million. The Government of Brazil stands ready to share their development strategy which is centred on employment and social protection programmes.

37. He then turned to the Brazilian context to describe recent developments. He explained that despite ranking among the countries with the highest income concentration, the Government of Brazil was able to harmonize three objectives: increased economic growth rates; reduced economic and social inequalities; and increased employment. Partly due to Bolsa Família - the now largest cash transfer programme in the developing world - launched in 2003 under the government of President Lula da Silva, which reached more than 12 million families, or 48 million people from the low-income strata. The programme included direct cash transfers to poor families with children, with a conditionality to ensure that children were kept in school and underwent regular health checks. The programme contributed significantly to reduce poverty; led to improvements in both school performance and health conditions of its beneficiaries; and helped break the cycle of poverty. Implementation of the programme led to increases in per capita family income from 30% in the higher income regions of Brazil to 85% in the lower income regions. It has also helped to increase the rate of economic growth, particularly in low-income regions of the country. To the extent that the programme raised household consumption for a large number of families, it stimulated the emergence of small businesses in a wide range of sectors in some of the poorest areas of the country.

38. Bolsa Família has therefore helped to generate growth that is more inclusive and equitable, as well as to link social protection to employment and productive works. Moreover, he explained that it was an example of an innovative social policy that has gone beyond assistance to become an active tool for social and economic transformation. The Ambassador claimed that one main reason for Bolsa Família’s
success is that it has been designed and implemented based on the country’s own capacity, needs and resources. The similarity of these conditions in other developing countries has led to the programme’s successful adaptation in many countries. The single registry concept, inter-sectoral coordination; monitoring and evaluation; and local implementation, he explained, were the main focus for SSC.

39. Despite the advances, the Ambassador pointed out that Brazil still faces great social and economic challenges and that policymakers in Brazil remain convinced that the promotion of social inclusion contributes to the sustainability of the country’s growth rate. He informed the conference that the Government of President Dilma Rousseff has recently launched a comprehensive national poverty alleviation plan, called *Brasil sem Miséria* with the objective of lifting 16.2 million Brazilians out of extreme poverty.

40. The plan will extend the *Bolsa Familia* programme to citizens that are not currently beneficiaries; strengthen income guarantee, by increasing the number of benefits paid to children; emphasize "productive inclusion" through capacity building; support poor rural families by providing seeds, grants and a crop purchase programme; and give priority to the expansion of a broad range of public services to reach the extremely poor.

41. As in *Bolsa Familia*, some of the challenges which have inspired the above policies may be common to many developing countries creating further possibilities for exchanges aimed at strengthening employment and social protection-centred development strategies between developing countries, as well as fostering a higher degree of SSC on such strategies. In conclusion, he mentioned that within Brazil, the evolution of Labour policy is illustrated by the fact that their Ministry of Labour is currently engaged in dialogue within a National Conference on Employment and Decent Work. With that, he expressed his wish that this Conference continue to discuss policy issues, not only in the area of conditional cash transfers, but also on innovative public employment programmes, which could lead to further collaboration with the ILO under the SSTC, in view to extend greater social, economic and employment opportunities.

42. Mr. Sam Morotoba, Deputy Director General of Public Employment Services of the Government of South Africa highlighted that employment generation is a key priority issue for their Government. He affirmed the commitment made on solving the unemployment problems to the G20 countries and that they would work towards this objective in close collaboration with the Government of Brazil and the Government of India. In South Africa, he added, several Departments work hand in hand, like the Departments of Land Reforms, Economic Development, Industry and Agriculture, and Education. The Government also provides a cluster of employment services to the unemployed, particularly for those searching for a job, including those affected by HIV/AIDS.

43. He also described how South Africa faces significant inflows of migrant workers from other African countries, due to the turbulent social and political situations that exist. Though this creates a threat to social security, the Government of South Africa intervenes to ensure that migrant workers are not exploited. Trade Unions also emerge as an important link to improve this situation. In addition, the speaker mentioned, that
in 2009 the Government of South Africa initiated an apprentice training programme under the Ministry of Education.

44. Ms. Amina Afzali, Minister of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled of the Government of Afghanistan described her country as having significant resources and geographically positioned to facilitate trade relations, but also as one that is facing severe security threats. She acknowledged that so far the potential of the economy to ensure employment generation has not been fully explored. However, the Government of Afghanistan has formulated a National Development Strategy to generate and sustain economic growth. Out of its 25 million population, around 10 million are of working age. 20 percent of civil servants are women. Unemployment rate is high, at around 11 per cent in urban areas and 12 per cent in rural areas, with some 11,000 foreign workers engaged in the construction and service sectors.

45. The Minister explained that the Ministry of Rural Development has initiated a set of employment programmes like construction of rural roads and enterprise development. The National Solidarity Rural Roads Programme has so far generated over 5.1 million man days of work and under another rural scheme, she highlighted that 3.8 million man days of work was generated. She mentioned that under the National Skills Development Programme around 70,000 people were trained in different sectors. She added that Afghanistan also has a Safety Net Programme and 18 Employment Service Centres in the country.

46. Mr. Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, Minister of Labour of the Government of Bangladesh started his intervention by describing the potential of South-South Cooperation as a platform to further economic development. He described Bangladesh as benefitting from a sustainable economic growth of 6 per cent and progressing towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The country is also formulating its sixth five-year plan. He confirmed that a major focus of the plan is to generate productive employment and expand social security to the working poor. As an indication of this, he described various initiatives in his country that are contributing to employment and social safety nets, mostly in rural areas, including child labour, migration and skills development policies and activities.

47. He shared his appreciation for the impact that the implementation of MGNREGA seems to be having in India on addressing poverty. He mentioned that a similar employment guarantee programme operates in northern regions to face seasonal floods and in the cyclone prone areas in Bangladesh. Food or cash for work programmes aim at generating employment in slack seasons and developing and maintaining rural infrastructure. These programmes also provide rural employment opportunities for women, training, and contribute to creating and maintaining public assets. He mentioned that the management of natural resources can open avenues for sustainable development. The Minister confirmed that his country is committed to ensuring social protection and mentioned that in addition to these programmes promoting inclusive growth in rural areas, they are supplemented by regular cash allowances to widows, maternal health vouchers and ante natal care for pregnant women. He concluded by mentioning that there is a need to invest in human resources to develop skills, increase human dignity and security. Their PASDEP Development Plan aims to create 1.5 million decent jobs.
48. Mr. Daniel Lemma Keterew, Ministry of Labour and Employment of the Government of Ethiopia gave a brief introduction to Ethiopia: a growth rate of 2.6 per cent, a population of 80 million, with 60 million in the working age group. With a significantly young population, he described the difficulties the country is facing in creating employment for new entrants to the labour market. He explained that the country aims to create three million new jobs for youth in micro, small and medium enterprises and is providing vocational training, in addition to formulating an employment policy. Although the country is stressing the importance of promoting decent work and achieving MDGs, he concluded that the mere creation of employment is not enough for poverty reduction. Inclusive growth needs to lay equal emphasis on both quantity and quality of employment generated.

49. Mr. Sospeter O. Ojamong, Assistant Minister of Labour of the Government of Kenya described several employment and cash transfer programmes that are focusing on youth, contributing to inclusive growth. He also mentioned that there were programmes focusing on women, members of vulnerable groups, and children. The country is also formulating an employment policy.

50. Dr. Edgar Quispe Remon, Vice Minister of Employment Promotion and Labour Capacity Building in the Ministry of Labour of the Government of Peru gave a presentation highlighting the case of Peru, broadly divided into three themes: the general employment context, active labour market policies for generating decent work, and challenges faced. The economy is in a high growth trajectory, recording a growth from 6 per cent reaching 8.9 per cent last year. There is an increase in public investment and employment. He pointed out that it was important to note that these are achieved with low inflation and decreasing poverty rates. A link is also established between employment generation programmes, those formulated to eradicate poverty and to improve economic growth. To promote decent work and productive labour there is an increased stress on skills development and the promotion of youth employment and gender equality.

51. He highlighted that the country has established a unique window for promoting employment, containing several measures like providing labour market information, vocational training, and assistance for job searches and to meet the special needs of migrant workers. The country also offers a programme to certify professionals and a programme offering temporary employment to rural and urban workers aiming to meet the needs of the vulnerable population.

52. Ms. Rosalinda Baldoz, Secretary of Labour of the, Government of Philippines explained that the Philippines pathway to growth in the medium term is embodied in the Philippine Development Plan 2010-16 with the goal of making growth inclusive through job creation and poverty reduction. The planned targets are meant to meet the Millennium Development Goals and to promote inclusive growth through employment generation and social protection.

53. The Philippines experience, she noted, indicate that balanced employment and social protection policy reform are necessary to find effective long-term solutions to structural unemployment and underemployment. There is also a need to improve the investment climate by addressing constraints to doing business, she added, including a
review of labour law and regulations that may be unnecessary and excessive. The Secretary also highlighted that emphasis needs to be put on addressing the jobs and skills mismatch through education and skills training using internationally recognized, including for migrant workers. She concluded her intervention by highlighting several programmes currently undertaken in this light in the Philippines.

54. Ms. Sarita Giri, Minister of Labour of the Government of Nepal described her country as being in the middle of a peace process with various initiatives in place promoting inclusive and sustainable growth. She explained that unemployment remains a huge problem in the country despite the introduction of liberal economic policies. A major share of the rural population lives in subsistence economy. Migration to foreign countries is emerging as a major employment option, with some 400,000 people estimated to be migrating annually to find employment, with a majority heading to the Gulf countries. She confirmed that remittances constituted 23 per cent of GDP shares, with some 26 per cent of households dependent on them.

55. The Minister confirmed that remittance has played a major role in poverty reduction and improvement in consumption expenditure in Nepal. She explained that several initiatives are underway to upgrade the skills level of unskilled and semi-skilled international labour migrant workers. She highlighted that the Government is formulating a Foreign Employment Policy in 2012, targeting to generate 1.64 million jobs in the country. Among the many positive features, the policy also aims to reinforce linkages between remittances and sustainable employment for the people. In this context, she added that the initiatives to promote Green Jobs in partnership with the ILO also deserved special mention. She concluded by saying that the Government of the Philippines looks forward to South-South Cooperation and to finding a sustainable solution together.

56. Mr. Mahmadaminov Mahmadamin Bozichavevich, Minister of Labour & Social Protection of the Government of Tajikistan described how his country had gained Independence and is now pursuing its way towards sustainable development. He described the main strategic goals set forward by the Government: attaining independence in energy, decreasing censorship and providing food security to its people. He then described several key documents that determine development policy, including the National Strategy of Development up to 2015, the State Strategy of Tajik Labour Market Development up to 2020, the Conception of the State Policy 2006-12 and the Conception of creation and preservation of work places 2008-15.

57. Out of its 7.6 million population in 2011, ranking third in the Central Asian countries, the Minister confirmed that over 52.1 per cent of the working age population were youth and that the majority live in rural areas. Despite the global financial crisis and the improved, sustainable growth noted in 2008; with only 29.4 per cent of the population employed, the GDP is still too low. To face this unemployment problem, the Minister described the introduction of a Program for promoting employment which provides financial assistance, consulting services and paid employment through public work schemes. The Government has provided over 8 million USD for the implementation of this scheme. The Minister also described various schemes supporting the private sector, including creating an enabling legal environment. And finally, he described the importance of reinforcing the skills level of the unemployed
and labour migrants. He made an appeal for further cooperation from the countries participating in this Conference.

58. Mr. Joseph Sitta Nganga, Economist of the Government of Tanzania highlighted the importance of employment and social protection-centred strategies to tackle poverty and unemployment which are inseparable, one leading to the other. He mentioned how the ILO, the Millennium Development Goals, and the African Union Extraordinary meeting in 2004 acknowledged decent employment, and especially youth employment, as an important avenue for poverty reduction. Although GDP growth averaged 7.1%, between 2001 and 2010, he confirmed that GDP has not been broad-based and pro-poor with unemployment still a problem, with 10.7 per cent unemployment in 2010. Rates of underemployment remain high particularly for the youth, who also lack voice in decision-making bodies, making them vulnerable to social exclusion and poverty.

59. Regarding employment and social protection centred strategies, the speaker described social protection as an investment in people, their employability and potential productivity. He highlighted various national and locally-based employment and social protection programmes which have existed since the 1970s, notably the many labour-based public work programmes and strategies supported by the donor communities, including the ILO and the World Bank. He however mentioned that aside from the Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF), many programmes were discontinued and not scaled up due to funding. He stressed that countries need to move away from the short-term safety net vision and move towards an employment guarantee, with a combination of adequate resources, appropriate management structures, effective planning and administration processes, capacity building, adequate technical inputs, and above all, political will. He then highlighted some of the challenges faced in fully implementing public employment and social protection centred strategies like the need for appropriate coverage, investment in human capital, resource availability, increasing in capacity and competitiveness of the labour force, and need the for stronger labour market institutions. He concluded by welcoming the consolidation and fostering of South-South Cooperation as a tool to establish development partnerships promoting social and sustainable growth.

60. Mr Madada Kyebakoze Sulaiman, Minister of State for Disability and Elderly of the Government of Uganda welcomed this Conference and the knowledge sharing on the linkages of employment and social protection to productive works, to enhance better cohesion for inclusive growth with equity. He acknowledged that unemployment presents one of the principle challenges in Uganda, with the scarcity of job opportunities that has led to rural urban migration, high competition in the labour market and the emergence of a rising number of unutilized and unproductive work forces particularly among young people. He added that 70 per cent of the labour force does not have any formal education while 66 per cent of working persons are employed in agriculture. 58 per cent of the working population outside of agriculture work in the informal sector since formal sector jobs are limited.

61. The Minister stressed that proper legislation and policy frameworks addressing innovations in employment is important. He described some of the social grants that have been extended to vulnerable families in chronic poverty. Many labour-intensive programmes and vocational training have benefited women and youth. He explained
that a number of these programmes were created to ensure that the excluded could participate in the labour force and that social protection was made available to the vulnerable. However, he confirmed that there were challenges, such as the mismatch between education and labour market demands, the low levels of productivity – Uganda ranked amongst the highest -, and the very high population growth, growing at a rate of 3.2 per cent.

62. In his introduction, Mr. Forrie Raisi, Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Security of the Government of Zambia, gave examples of various programmes contributing to sustainable inclusive growth, currently funded by various donors – including child labour and trafficking, labour-intensive public works, women’s entrepreneurship for women with disabilities, social security for all, HIV/AIDS and vocational training. He shared his satisfaction in that over the past few years ILO’s approach at the country level was progressing to a more coordinated and streamlined programme focusing on national priorities and linked to their national development agenda. He described the Decent Work Country Programme for Zambia as having the aim to coordinate and align technical assistance, support and resources around an achievable set of priority outcomes.

63. He then highlighted various pro-employment policies and programmes that the government has put in place, including the Private Sector Development (PSD) programme, the National Employment and Labour Market Policy (NELMP), the Fifth and Sixth National Development Plans (FNDP/SNDP), and the Micro and Small Enterprise Development (MSME) Policy. He noted that the FNDP originally did not include a chapter on Employment and Labour, but that with lobbying from the ILO and the MLSS, it was included providing a clearer focus on these issues and also referring to the NELMP’s contribution to national development. He added that the main focus of the SNDP is to diversify the economy away from mining to agriculture, tourism, manufacturing, energy (including biofuels) and infrastructure development. The Deputy Minister concluded with the importance of the Vision 2030 launched in 2007, which outlines their long-term alternative development policies based on decent work opportunities that ensure respect for fundamental human rights and principles. He welcomed having the opportunity to learn from other countries’ experiences.

64. Mr. Paul Dzviti, Director of Labour Administration, Ministry of Labour & Social Welfare of the Government of Zimbabwe apologized on behalf of his Minister who was not able to attend. The talk focused on Zimbabwe’s economic situation and employment scenario. Zimbabwe’s economy is in transition, moving from economic instability to economic stability and sustainable growth. The economy was characterized by hyper inflation during 1998-2008. The country also experienced negative growth rates and a high share of informal sector employment. Since 2009 the country has achieved macroeconomic stability, with a peak in economic growth at around 11 per cent in 2009. This was mainly due to the increase noted in agricultural production, increased value of mineral products and a recovery in tourism.

65. It is also important to note the impact of economic growth of employment. In Zimbabwe, around 41 per cent of the population is under 15 years. The economy does not have the capacity to absorb new entrants to the labour market, which naturally leads to an increase in informal sector employment. Though open employment tends to be low, there is also major problem with underemployment with youth most
affected. The major challenge for the economy is to expand employment opportunities with inclusive growth policies.

66. He then described some of the programmes that have been implemented as the government’s response to these challenges: the blueprint Medium Term Plan (MTP) for the period 2011-15 which aims at accelerating the pace of economic growth to generate adequate levels of employment; the National Employment Policy Framework focusing on increasing the employment intensity of growth; a number of targeted programmes for youth and vulnerable groups; and labour law reforms. He concluded his talk by highlighting areas in which they could benefit from enhanced South-South Cooperation: development of appropriate technologies that promote labour intensive production methods, training and support for SMEs, and labour market administration and regulation.

67. The Moderator, Mr. José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, ILO Executive Director, Employment summarized this session under 15 key points that were highlighted by the various speakers: 1) SSC provides a good platform for knowledge sharing about home grown solutions since more similarities can be found between south countries. 2) Learning curves have been steep, but many countries have scaled up programmes that have made growth more inclusive, have reduced aggregate inequality, and have socially and politically empowered millions of people. 3) Sustainable and inclusive solutions are those which are based on local people, local institutions and local capacities. 4) Inter-institutional coordination is key. 5) Appropriate technologies, including the role of new technologies like the ones used in India and Peru, should be encouraged. 6) Move from a low capability public administration to one that is highly effective dealing with corruption and leakages. 7) Use appropriate regional, central, provincial, and local administration and processes. 8) Find more appropriate ways to support expatriate workers, including facing the challenges of remittances and supporting their reintegration. 9) The role of education and training was highlighted, however without much mention to the skills mismatch problem. 10) Move from fragmented systems to more systemic approach and universal coverage of social protection. 11) Address and promote the transition from the informal economy to formality. 12) Future areas for SSC could include work around public employment programmes, cash transfers, active labour market policies, migrant and returning migrant workers, skills development policies, monitoring and evaluation, youth employment, and he added one point which was not mentioned, industrial policies. 13) Decent Work Agenda can provide a good roadmap. 14) South-North cooperation and cooperation in the G20 should also not be neglected, as we see developed countries looking to south solutions also. 15) SSC and knowledge sharing through this conference has shown that there is a lot of innovation and keen interest in the solutions being shared.

68. In his concluding remarks as the Chairperson, the Minister of Labour and Employment of the, Government of India, confirmed that the discussions and debates would pave way for better south-south cooperation in employment and social protection centered development policies that facilitate inclusive growth. He stressed that the conference was taking place at a critical period when the global economy is still struggling to recover from the financial crisis and trying to generate new jobs. To address job recovery and job creation, he emphasized the need to go beyond traditional and conventional approaches of development. He highlighted that
developing countries facing similar problems could greatly benefit from creating and sustaining an enabling environment of south south cooperation.

69. The Minister then described India’s National Skills Policy and offered to share their expertise with other countries in this area. He also mentioned that India is one of the countries least affected by the global financial crisis, particularly due to its flagship MGNREGA programme. He shared his interest to learn more about the impact of other innovative public employment programmes in Brazil, South Africa and other developing countries through this Conference.

70. He highlighted that India’s Active Labour Market Policies are pursued to generate wage as well as self-employment and that employment opportunities are created through various employment intensive programmes. In addition, social security schemes have been put in place for informal sector workers, through the Unorganized Workers’ Social Security Act of 2008. The Minister also acknowledged the need to have more flexible arrangements for the mobility of capital and labour. He stressed that protectionism may provide short-term illusionary gains, whilst in the long-run it will boomerang affecting job-recovery, job-creation, and job-dynamics across the global economy. He concluded his talk by reaffirming the commitment of the Government of India in promoting South-South Cooperation for achieving sustainable inclusive growth.

Overview of the Employment-Led Initiatives for Sustainable Inclusive Growth in Developing Countries

70. The Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Labour and Employment of the Government of India, gave a brief introduction to the Overview of Employment-Led Initiatives for Sustainable Inclusive Growth in Developing Countries and introduced the panellists.

71. Mr. D. K. Jain, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development introduced the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), the largest public employment programme in the world. He distinguished MGNREGA from past welfare programmes and explained that MGNREGA is a rights-based, demand driven, people centric Act providing supplementary livelihood through employment or unemployment benefits for wage seekers, with the wages linked to the consumer price index. He highlighted some of the challenges India faces: the large underemployment and surplus labour force in rural areas with little or no skills, the insecurity for millions in the rural areas who relied heavily on agriculture for livelihoods, little or no participation of the poor in the development programmes, low agricultural productivity, low and unequal wage rates between men and women and environmental degradation.

72. The MGNREGA was initiated with the objective of providing supplementary wage-employment safety net opportunities in the rural areas, creating sustainable rural livelihoods through rejuvenation of natural resource base – land, water, and forests, and strengthening grassroots democratic processes and infusing transparency and accountability in rural governance.

73. The Joint Secretary described the main features of MGNREGA as 100 days of wage employment guarantee for every rural household to do unskilled manual work, with unemployment benefits if work could not be provided. He added that wages were
linked to the Consumer Price Index. He also underscored the importance of transparency and accountability, saying wages were credited to bank/post office accounts.

74. In addition to the workers, the primary stakeholders included the central government, which provided the funds; the state governments, which prepared the schemes and oversaw the implementation; the panchayats, for the planning and execution; and the community, which was involved in the planning and oversight. MGNREGA has some “non-negotiables”, like the prohibition of contractors and the use of labour displacing machines.

75. The Joint Secretary described the workflow of MGNREGA and described the registration process. MGNREGA is based on the household as the unit of entitlement. Application is made by an adult to the local Gram Panchayat. The Gram Panchayat in turn verifies the application. Once registered, the household will be issued a Job Card.

76. In regards to the entitlements of workers, the Joint Secretary indicated the nature of basic worksite facilities such as the provision of safe drinking water, shaded areas for workers and children’s care, and first aid kits.

77. It was further stated that social audits and public accountability were significant features for the credibility, accountability and sustainability of the programme and all data, information, planning and implementation are in the public domain. With the Right to Information Act, information can also be sought from the panchayats through a simple application.

78. Focusing on the impact, the Joint Secretary informed the conference that studies had indicated an increase in agriculture minimum wages, wage earned per day and annual income, and bargaining power of labourers had increased; over 98 million accounts had been opened and distress migration had been reduced in many parts of the country. It was also found that targeting of marginalized groups had been effective and there was no gender differential for MGNREGA wage rates. It was also found that MGNREGA resulted in livelihood diversification in rural areas that it had been used as supplementary income source during non-agricultural seasons, and green jobs were created and productivity impact was positive.

79. Total expenditure in the last 6 years was US$ 35 billion, generating more than 11 billion person days, with 48 per cent female participation, and an average wage increase of 45 percent. The share of socially disadvantaged families was covered.

80. In conclusion, the Joint Secretary gave an indication of the roadmap ahead. The priorities were improving mechanisms for capturing demand for work; improving quality of assets; greater community participation in planning, implementation and monitoring; and strengthening linkages with livelihood and natural resource management.

81. The Ambassador of the Government of Brazil to India, presented key elements, challenges and the way forward for Bolsa Familia, Brazil’s flagship conditional cash transfer programme. Launched in 2003 by the government of President Lula da Silva,
Bolsa Familia strives to reduce current poverty through direct transfer of funds to low-income families and to break the generational cycle of poverty. Reaching over 12 million families (around 48 million people), it is considered the largest cash transfer programme in the developing world. It provides a monthly allowance of 32 reais (about US$19) per child attending school, to a maximum of five children, to all families with per capita income of below the poverty line of 140 reais (US$ 82) a month. The condition is that families commit to keeping their children in school and taking them for regular health checks. Families withdraw the cash using a debit card. Female headed households have a priority in getting the allowance.

82. Noting the key results and findings from numerous evaluations and studies, the Ambassador said Bolsa Familia had reduced income and regional inequalities and extreme poverty, improved school performance and health conditions of beneficiaries, gave rise to small businesses in poor areas due to increase in household consumption, and enhanced rural development. Notwithstanding the impressive impact, the challenge of multidimensionality of poverty still remained with over 16 million people in extreme poverty, he noted. The way forward was to improve capacities and increase opportunities through income guarantee, access to public services, and productive inclusion to achieve enhanced income and improved welfare.

83. The Bolsa Familia extends its outreach by actively seeking beneficiaries where poverty exists and constantly improving the programme. The goal is to reach every family in extreme poverty (800,000 new families) by the end of 2013. The Ambassador briefed on the productive inclusion concept, whereby one million urban beneficiaries will be offered training by 2014 so they can be better qualified and improves their opportunities in the labour market. For the rural productive inclusion component, technical assistance, seeds, grants and access to clear water will be provided to 253,000 small farmers by 2014. He also mentioned the food purchase programme whereby 455,000 extremely poor and poor families of small farmers will sell their crops to the federal programme by 2014.

84. The Ambassador concluded by reiterating the commitment by the Government of President Dilma Rousseff, which said considers the Bolsa Familia a social policy instrument for economic development, contributing to Brazil’s growth through inclusion for sustainable growth.

85. Dr. Kate Philip, Adviser on Employment to the Government of South Africa, started her presentation highlighting the fact that employment is the critical interface between both the social and the economic foundations in the society, affecting on one hand families, communities, societies and on the other hand the economy by raising the costs of poverty which could even translate to economic instability. She argued that even efficient economies with high rates of growth, may not necessarily create employment for everyone and that markets fail to create employment in times of crisis. Therefore there is a need for an instrument to create employment even when markets are not doing well. Public employment programmes offer such an instrument, she argued, and the global job crisis had provided a context for innovation in this area.

86. She then highlighted the unemployment scenario in South Africa which is around 25%. Most of the unemployed are under the age of 35 and 60 % of the unemployed have never been employed. There is a rising rate of unemployed matriculates and
graduates. The country does not have any real social protection for the unemployed as the contributory Unemployment Insurance Fund covers only an average of 2-3% of the unemployed. The unemployed are primarily dependent on cash transfers, which mean the cost burden of supporting the unemployed falls mainly on poor communities, thereby aggravating poverty and inequality.

87. As a result of tri-partite negotiations, the country has evolved a policy commitment to public employment in 2002 and has initiated the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). The programme focuses on infrastructure for increasing labour intensity, environment and social sector. The Community Work Programme is a new component of EPWP, inspired by MGNREGA to demonstrate the benefits of an employment guarantee in the South African context. Its target is one million beneficiaries by 2014-15. The target of the programme is also to have a site in every municipality in this timeframe and thereby mainstreaming CWP across the society. The vision of the programme is to enable systemic-level impacts instead of project-level impacts, by creating institutional architecture for an employment guarantee.

88. Detailing its key features the speaker described CWP, a mandate of the Department of Cooperative Governance since 2010, as an area-based programme targeting 1,000 people per site and offering part-time work on an on-going basis for two days a week, amounting to 100 days a year. ‘Useful work’ is identified through community participation and the conditions of work are covered by the Ministerial Determination of Working Conditions in EPWP. CWP is implemented by non-profit implementing agencies and an advisory reference group is established at each site. Part-time work was selected because it provides on-going, rather than short-duration support, enables greater participation of women, and is unlikely to displace full-time work, regardless of the wage rate, reducing concerns about labour market displacements.

89. Elaborating on the concept of ‘useful work’ the speaker said community processes are used to identify such work. Learning methodologies were adapted from Brazil’s organizational method and the consultative and mapping processes help to translate social issues to a work agenda – problems to solutions. The type of works involved include care services, food security, youth recreation, support to schools, community safety, minor infrastructure work, maintenance and clean-up activities, and environmental rehabilitation.

90. Going into details on care services, the speaker indicated it was the biggest area of work in the CWP and there were indications of its positive social and health outcomes. She emphasized that it was important to remember that care-givers also need care. However, there were opportunities for working on care services, not only with the elderly and sick but also providing school support in the form of, for instance, school/security patrols, growing vegetables for school feeding, overseeing homework classes, being teacher’s aide, and creating and maintaining sports facilities/gym.

91. The speaker reflected on the transformational potential of ‘useful work’ in that it adds social and wage value to labour, provides access to ‘capital’ and enables a framework for collaborative action between government and the local community, providing opportunities to solve problems. She discussed the challenges which included the reliance on good community development skills, a view of developmental state as one
92. In conclusion the speaker pitched a few thoughts to the participants. Reiterating that South Africa had drawn on lessons from Brazil and India, she asked if the CWP may also have lessons to be learned. Other countries, including Brazil, may want to consider productive works, among those she mentioned there may be scope for care work and social services type of ‘works’; the scope for more skilled work; the scope for MGNREGA to act as a platform for multiple mandates of government. She emphasized the role of work in conferring dignity and the role of public employment in inclusive growth – filling the gaps where markets fail so that market failure does not mean social crisis.

93. Due to the limited time left in this Session, Ms. Tine Staermose, Director of the ILO Decent Work Team for South Asia and Country Office for India, requested that questions be taken up separately over the coffee break.

**Thematic panel 1**

**Spectrum from Public Works to EGS**

94. The Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Labour and Employment of the Government of India gave a brief introduction to the session. In his opening remarks, the Chairperson, Mr. Khandaker Mosharraf Hussain, Minister of Labour and Employment of the Government of Bangladesh highlighted the importance of public works programmes as a means to complement private sector employment and to address underemployment and to extend social security. Designed properly these programmes can be the engine to lead in poverty alleviation efforts, he said. He then proceeded to introduce the moderator and panelists.

95. The first presentation was made by Mr. Kwaku Osei-Bonsu, Senior Specialist of Employment Intensive Investments, ILO South Africa introducing South Africa’s Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). He placed the EPWP into context by providing the social and economic conditions of South Africa highlighting that poverty is still pervasive with 39% living below the poverty line, earning below $58 per month. He added more than 29% (4.6 million) of the population is unemployed. The combination of high unemployment rates and high crime rates has pushed the Government of South Africa to put in place various short, medium and long-term measures, making employment creation a priority. The EPWP is one of such medium to long-term programme, creating work opportunities through the delivery of public and community services by investing in infrastructure development through labour-intensive methods and income transfer to poor households. The main objective is infrastructure development to support social and economic development with a secondary objective of employment creation and private sector development.

96. In Phase I, spanning 2004-09, the EPWP reached approximately 300,000 people annually creating one million work opportunities over five years. It focused mainly on infrastructure, environmental, cultural, social and economic sectors. However, no minimum wage was applied at that time. Based on the success of Phase I, the EPWP as it went into Phase II from April 2009- March 2014, sought to create two million full time equivalent jobs or 4.5 million work opportunities for an average of 100 days. It is implemented in four sectors (Infrastructure, Environment and Culture, Social and
Non State Sector). For both Phase I and II, all activities are funded out of public budget lines. Training is an integral component of the programme, funded by the departments of Labour and Higher Education and Training.

97. The speaker then described some of the common features of the two phases of EPWP, including that workers are employed on a temporary basis, the Department of Public Works is the overall coordinating department, and is led by sector-coordinating department in each of the designated sectors. He then addressed some of the key changes, including the fact that the programme has been mainstreamed into normal mandates of public bodies; an incentive grant was provided for targets; the Community Works Programme was introduced as a non-state sector, the accountability has been spread over different public services; and a Protocol agreement was signed.

98. In the context of sub-programmes, he described various capacity building projects, including Vukuphile, which trains individuals in labour-intensive methods of construction to become contractors and supervisors; the National Youth Service Programme, providing skills training to youth; greening initiatives in municipalities, and various other development programmes. In terms of its impact apart from strengthening the ability of the Government of South Africa to make a contribution towards the alleviation of unemployment and poverty, the assets created and the services delivered have helped improve the existing inequalities. Furthermore, the focus on target groups such as women, youth and people with disabilities has had broader positive impact on vulnerable and marginalized groups. Participants are self-selected preventing job displacement. Local sourcing was also encouraged as well as due to wages earned by participants local economies were stimulated. Environmental benefits include a major focus on a green approach across all sectors and Food for Waste Programmes focus on both service delivery and recycling. However, whereas immediate short term employment has been generated, long term job security and graduation strategies still need to be addressed.

99. He then spoke about some key challenges, such as the need to: strengthen intergovernmental relations, further mainstream implementation of EPWP, create appropriate institutional arrangements; create adequate exit opportunities, ensure that employment-intensity is prioritized across entire value chain of projects. He also added that the high costs of mentorship programmes for contractor development and the lack of capacity at the implementation level were also challenges.

100. In conclusion, the speaker mentioned that the EPWP plans to improve performance and maximize the impact of the existing programmes through consolidation. There are plans to identify and introduce new programmes, strengthen institutional arrangements and pursue key partnerships, aiming at the target of creating 11 million jobs by 2030 through the expansion of the public works programme.

101. The second presentation was made by Mr. Ato Birhanu Wolde Michael, Director of the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP), Ministry of Agriculture, Government of Ethiopia. He started by giving an overview of Ethiopia as a country with a population of 80 million, 29.2 percent of the population living in poverty, and a recurring food insecurity problem being the greatest challenge. In this context, the
Government of Ethiopia launched the New Coalition for Food Security in 2003 under which the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) is one of the pillars together with: Resettlement; Household Asset Building Program (HABP); and Complementary Community Investments (CCI).

102. Focusing on the PSNP, the speaker underlined that the programme is designed to assure food consumption and prevent asset depletion for rural food insecure households in a way that stimulates markets, improves access to services and natural resources and rehabilitates the natural environment. The PSNP seeks to achieve this objective through the provision of transfers to chronically food insecure households, both through cash or food transfers, and through productive employment, establishing new and existing community assets. The programme covers 7.6 million chronically food insecure beneficiaries in 8 regions and 319 districts in drought prone areas of Ethiopia. He described the criteria used for the selection of beneficiaries: households facing continuous food shortage for 3 months and households that have suddenly become more vulnerable as a result of a severe loss of assets. In terms of its design, the PSNP uses the government system aligning with the existing roles and responsibilities and integrating them with the decentralized objective of the government and building horizontal linkages. The PSNP transfer methodology offers the same levels of transfers to households through both labour-intensive Public Works and also through Direct Support in cash or in kind on a monthly basis for six consecutive months.

103. The public works are labour intensive community-based activities that are designed to provide employment to food insecure households with able-bodied members following environmental and social sustainable frameworks to ensure longer-term impacts. Public works that carried out are small scale, mainly directed at unskilled temporary employment which includes: soil and water conservation; water harvesting; small-scale irrigation; water supply schemes; afforestation; rural infrastructure development; social services. He mentioned that the programme has seen improvements in household food security, protection of household assets, and increased access to basic services. He pointed out that both health and education of children had improved and the programme has created an environment more conducive to economic growth and poverty reduction through greater access to social, physical and market infrastructure. A case in point noted by the speaker, was that households participating in PSNP perceived themselves to be better off, as more than the 300,000 households who were food insecure in 2006 had found food security in 2011.

104. Highlighting the challenges the speaker underlined that the programme faces capacity constraints as the needs far outweigh the availability of the programme. Furthermore, delays in transfers and the lack of strong monitoring and evaluation as well as frequent staff turnover are on-going challenges. Nevertheless, he stressed PSNP has proven that the government system can be utilized to implement safety net programmes at scale in low income settings. However he noted that this requires full integration into the existing systems and responsibilities of regular staff and management. The ideal situation is a safety net programme that is government led with multiple funding sources and multiple implementing organizations.
105. The third presentation was made by Dr. Ashok Sahu, Principal Adviser, Labour Employment and Manpower Division, Planning Commission of the Government of India, who introduced India’s MGNREGA as a Public Employment Programme and Enabler of Convergence and sustainable development. He stated his presentation by stressing that public employment programmes should be a conduit for providing social protection. In the context of globalization, crises and prevalence of large informal sectors, public employment programmes can be a source for providing social protection, of which there are many forms, such as the Social Protection Floor. In the context of India, he explained that India is increasingly pursuing a right based approach in terms of Right to Information, Right to Education, Right to Work, Right to Food, Right to Health, Right to Social Security and such rights are invoked through implementation of various acts and schemes.

106. An employment led strategy for social protection in India is envisaged in the enactment and implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), 2005. It was designed “to provide for the enhancement of livelihood security of the households in rural areas of the country by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in every financial year to every household, whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work”. MGNREGA ensures 100 days of employment in a year to a household at the minimum wage. Objectives of MGNREGA include enhanced livelihood security, rejuvenated natural resource base, asset base created by augmenting household income, enhanced local economy, providing sustained wage employment and the empowerment of women. Given the focus on employment creation for unskilled workers through labour-based works, improvement of land and water resources are an important part of the works undertaken.

107. The speaker also described some additional positive features of the programme as its scalability, accessibility, self-selection, congenial workplace, asset creation, livelihood security, strengthening of grassroots democracy, increased bargaining strength of workers, etc. Other positive features include the reduction of distress migration, the increase in agricultural minimum wages and the fact that MGNREGA is being used as a supplementary income source during non agricultural seasons. He described the challenges as ensuring sustainability, strengthening the competence of the administrative and implementation capacity, decreasing leakages, increasing the involvement of civil society, increasing the days of work and wages, and creating appropriate graduation strategies. As for the way forward for MGNREGA, the speaker concluded his talk by highlighting the need for convergence, improvement in delivery, better use of ICT in monitoring, and better awareness of the programme.

108. On behalf of the Minister from the Government of Argentina, Mr. Ernesto Alvarez, Ambassador from the Government of Argentina to India, gave a brief presentation on the situation in his country. In his opening remarks he gave an overview of the socio-economic and political crisis that took place in his country during 2001-02 and described the Plan Jefes y Jefas de Hogar (Jefes). This programme was initiated as a response to the severe financial and economic crisis in Argentina and targeted households with children under eighteen where the head of household was unemployed. It provided part-time work (20 hours a week) and paid 150 pesos a month (Approximately USD 50 at the time). At its peak in 2003, the programme
reached 2 million households. Since 2003, the number of households in the Jefes Programme declined.

109. In this context, he noted that the new concept of public policy, especially contributing to economic, labour, employment and social development became more important. It is within this framework that the Department of Employment established a set of active protection and unemployment benefits tools designed to: (i) improve the employability of workers, ii) assist in the integration and reintegration process, iii) guide them in finding employment and iv) contribute to sustaining employment in situations of economic crises.

110. The Ambassador confirmed that these active policies and tools are articulated within an institutional framework that integrates several areas of the three levels of government with sectorial actors; the educational, scientific and technological fields; and civil society. In this regard, and from the beginning of the current administration, institutional strengthening mechanisms were implemented to provide technical and financial support to institutions that shared a growth and development model that included the expansion of quality employment in order to achieve higher levels of social and labour inclusion. He indicated the importance of an employment services network to strengthen areas of employment, technology transfer for job placement, human resources training and ongoing technical assistance as investments. He concluded his talk with strategic action lines designed to set up specific tools to address employment-related issues, these include: improving the employability of the unemployed and employed workers, improving working conditions, and promoting policies that support unemployed workers into joining formal employment through independent work arrangements or associations.

111. To start the discussion, the Moderator, Mr. Terje Tessem, Chief of the Employment Intensive Investment Programme in ILO Geneva posed critical questions concerning the reconciliation between the objectives of creating immediate employment to scale and assisting people to graduate out of poverty. Remarkling on the preceding technical presentations, he queried whether patterns were seen in the various Employment Guarantee Schemes that generally included infrastructure works that also provide for social protection. He remarked on the challenges of implementation of such schemes, how objectives are chosen, how choices are made on targeting and institutional set up, and how most people and beneficiaries of these programmes are given the opportunity to break the cycle of poverty.

112. The first speaker from the floor, Ms. Rosalinda Baldoz, Secretary of Labour and Employment of the Government of Philippines, questioned the mechanisms for payment and wage fixing for beneficiaries of MGNREGA and the means for ensuring Decent Work. Given that Theme 3 will focus on Income Security and Targeting, the Moderator, the question was deferred to the afternoon session.

113. Mr. S.P. Tiwari, General Secretary, Central Committee Trade Union Coordination Centre of India called upon the ILO to provide technical assistance to build up the capacities of trade unions to be able to play an effective role in the social protection of people participating in large scale employment generating schemes.
114. Mr. R.P.A. Wimalaweera, Senior Assistant Secretary of the Government of Sri Lanka questioned how such mass employment generating programmes could be made sustainable. Taking the question further Mr. Herbert Mkhize, Advisor to the Minister of Labour, Ministry of Labour and Employment, (Man -from South Africa) noted that many of these schemes only create temporary job opportunities for participating populations and in no way can be considered as employment generation schemes. He shared his concern about the Governments not being in the best positions to create employment.

115. Dr. Edgar Quispe Remon, Vice Minister of Labour of the Government of Peru, raised his concern about short-term public employment programmes and their lack of sustainability to really address poverty reduction. He stressed that longer-term programmes, like the Peruvian road maintenance programme, are a more effective way to create employment and to reduce poverty.

116. Mr. Naresh Narwal, Additional Labour Commissioner of Haryana State of the Government of India asked Dr. Sahu about the guaranteed unemployment allowance under MGNREGA and if there had been any disbursements of this benefit.

117. Ms. Lourdes Transmonte, Acting Secretary of Labour of the Government of the Philippines acknowledged that public employment programmes were green and could be targeted, but asked what the social protection coverage is for the beneficiaries of such programmes, and also asked for further information on the safety and health aspects of PEPs.

118. With reference to the EPWP and in response to the questions from the floor, the Senior Specialist of Employment Intensive Investments in ILO South Africa confirmed that the EPWP is the outcome of tripartite negotiation and is considered as an employer of last resort. He also added that EPWP operates under a Code of Good Practices that ensures that social protection and occupational safety and health are covered. There is also a Ministerial Determination that guides wages in South Africa, he commented.

119. The speaker from the Government of Ethiopia, Mr. Wolde, in response to the delegate from South Africa, highlighted that many of these public employment programme enables participants to improve their livelihoods, offering a guarantee to fill the unemployment gap and contributing to poverty eradication, but also environmental rehabilitation for better food production.

120. The speaker from the Government of India, Dr. Sahu, responded in reference to MRNREGA that, design and capacity issues exist in such programmes and each country must individually seek out what is best in their context. Although a Minimum Wages Act in India exists, minimum wages under MGNREGA have been set at different levels. He confirmed that they are looking to find a solution to ensure parity, and although wages should be mainstreamed, there has to be enough space for this kind of work. He acknowledged that more attention is needed on issues regarded to occupational safety and health. He also added that such converging large scale programmes must be inter-departmental and must be implemented through an integrated approach.
121. To close the discussion, the Moderator confirmed that jobs created under employment guarantee schemes are complementing private sector jobs, and if well designed and resourced, they can and do support the employability of people through skills development, they create productive assets and they also support sustainable growth as a long-term investment.

**Thematic panel 2**

**Asset Creation Linkages with Green Jobs and Climate Change Adaptation**

122. The Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Labour and Employment of the Government of India gave a brief introduction to the session. Mr. Ravi Mathur, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment of the Government of India chaired this session and introduced the moderator and the panellists. He began the session by giving the definition of green jobs as “decent jobs that help reducing negative environmental impact ultimately leading to environmentally, economically and socially sustainable enterprises and economies”.

123. The first speaker, Mr. Shailendra Jha, ILO National Programme Manager in Nepal at the outset presented a brief overview of Nepal as a post conflict country with low economic growth. He highlighted the green focus in Nepal by describing their three-year programme on agriculture and tourism value chain upgrading. This programme focuses on employment intensive and inclusive economic growth as its objectives covering four districts of the country. It has an integrated approach encompassing association building, capacity development, infrastructure, credit and finance, skills development, enterprise and market linkages. He then described how these various activities relate to *Green Works*, through rural roads construction, district road management, development of irrigation canals and ponds, rustic store, watershed management, production of non timber forest products, floriculture, solid waste management and eco-tourism promotion and how they have all led to job creation and income generation. The model of tourism value chain has also led to the establishment of a number of home-stays, construction of trails and roads, generation of trained manpower, tourism promotion and increased tourists arrival.

124. On the issue of a Green Works and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) strategy in Nepal, he mentioned that Nepal has participated in the meetings of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC); signed up to the conventions from the Rio Summit, the Kyoto Protocol, and the Sagarmatha Declaration on Climate Change; and have put National Adaptation Program of Action (NAPA) and the Local Adaptation Plan of Action (LAPA) in place. The country’s Three Years Plan (2010-12) gives emphasis on promoting green development, making environmental activities climate friendly, mitigating the adverse impacts of climate change, and promoting adaptation. The rationale and factors influencing the green strategy in Nepal are employment and income generation, capacity building of stakeholders, business association/groups and SMEs, assets creation in integrated market development model, environmental concerns, and linked with national, district priorities/plans.

125. The speaker then went on to describe the choice of design through territorial-based approaches, and the delivery and implementation arrangements through National Steering Committees and through Local Economic Development (LED) forums at district level. He described the implementation challenges as policy integration, integration into sectoral plans for complementary funds and ownership, capacity
development at all levels, and cost-sharing between all stakeholders. A recent evaluation study, he said, showed that the direct paid job creation impact was 150,000 person days, of jobs up to 150 days annually, with indirect benefits to more than 400,000 people, 200 producers groups developed as entrepreneurs, and the programme has contributed to conservation of bio-diversity. He concluded his intervention by highlighting the main lessons by mentioning that the capacity building of LED forums and stakeholders is a continuous process and that the private sector needs to be a key element of LED, through local resource-based planning and local ownership, he stressed that these schemes have a potential to create millions of green jobs in different fields.

126. The second presentation was made by Dr. Supayoga Hadi, Deputy Minister for Special Area Development, Ministry of Disadvantaged Region, Government of Indonesia, who gave a brief overview of the green focus in Indonesia. Regarding the CCA strategy in Indonesia, he highlighted that many documents that have been adopted by the Government of Indonesia, like the Indonesian Climate Change Sectoral Roadmap (ICCSR), National Action Plan for Climate Change and National Action Plan to reduce Green House Gases. He stressed that engaging the Indonesian economy into an environmentally sustainable and low carbon development path will bring profound and lasting adjustments to the socio-economic structures of Indonesia. He noted that currently in Indonesia, a Green jobs mapping study is being undertaken to better understand the linkages between the economy, employment and the environment and assess the potential for Green Jobs creation in the Indonesian economy.

127. He then continued to highlight various other national level activities as part of a Green Jobs project, including the development of a Project Advisory Committee, Green Jobs training for trade unions, Green Jobs foundation training, the development of a white paper on sustainable tourism, skills certification for ecotour guides, etc. He also cited other Green Jobs projects like the Green National Program for Community Empowerment and Support for Poor and Disadvantaged Area (SPADA). He added that Indonesia is implementing a Green Jobs project with the technical assistance from the ILO and out of the discussions and activities of this program, a number of additional options for actions have emerged, including transformation of the network of government owned vocational training centres to meet the demand for new skills. He was optimistic that at the end of the project, the ILO constituents and national partners would be more knowledgeable about the impacts of climate policies on the labour market and the potential for gender responsive green jobs creation. He emphasized that the Green Job in Asia project could become a model for creating decent work for other countries as well.

128. Prof. Ravindranath, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, began his presentation by confirming that employment generation through rural and agricultural development and poverty alleviation programmes can create Green Jobs, at the same time contributing to mitigation and adaptation to climate change, in addition to generating environmental services. Most labour-based public employment programmes address land, water and forest issues in rural areas and lead to conservation or regeneration of natural resources.

129. Although not stated as official objectives, these programmes have climate change-related implications as co-benefits or byproducts. Examples of adaptation include
ground water recharge, soil and water conservation, agro-forestry, and soil organic matter enhancement. The latter two also contribute to mitigation.

130. He used examples of MGNREGA to prove how land-based public employment programmes can bring multiple benefits. The natural resource conservation and socio-economic benefits from MGNREGA works include: water conservation and harvesting, irrigation, land development, drought proofing, afforestation, and renovation of traditional water bodies. These create Green Jobs, and the scale is tens to hundreds of thousand jobs per category per year. The environmental services from MGNREGA stretches from local, regional to global ones as the latter include carbon sequestration, biodiversity conservation, improved adaptive capacity, and vulnerability reduction to current climate risks. He gave a concrete example of desilting of water storage bodies to demonstrate multiple benefits.

131. After reconfirming his affirmative views of attaining employment and environmental benefits through these rural employment programmes, he stressed the need for further convergence of the two issues. If coordinated well, natural resource conservation may no longer be needed, he reiterated.

132. Mr. Vincent Jugault, Senior Specialist on Green Jobs, ILO Bangkok, as the Moderator, began by stating that the presentations was further evidence that public employment programmes can make significant contributions to climate change and environmental issues. What is new is the evidence on contribution to environmental outcomes. He also referred to many challenges identified in proper design and implementation of these programmes. He insisted that, by incorporating green pillars, environmental threats today can be converted to opportunities in future. All these may have implications on climate adaptation funds. He then invited questions from the audience.

133. Mr. Madada Kyebakoze Sulaiman, Ministry of State for Disability and Elderly, Government of Uganda, asked for ways to build synergies with other government departments and institutions when the programmes cut across several thematic areas. Mr. Sam Morotoba, DDG Public Employment Service, Government of South Africa requested further clarification on the definition of Green Jobs, stating that a true green job for him are the ones that did not exist before and that are intentionally green, such as new factory work that produces electric cars. Mr. R.P.A. Wimalaweera, Senior Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Labour Relations, Government of Sri Lanka brought the attention of the speakers to the social aspect of Green Jobs: Shouldn’t public work programmes address education and health factors of those engaged in the green sectors such as tourism, industries and waste management?

134. In his response, Prof. Ravindranath admitted that at present there was not any official plan to make MGNREGA intentionally contribute to climate change. It was happening as a co-benefit or byproduct. It is important to further explore synergies through convergence with other programmes on environment and economic development knowing it is not easy to do so at the local level. When it comes to the definition, he pointed at the risk of getting lost among different definitions coming from different perspectives. For him, any rural job that impacts on the poor could be considered a Green Job, but he also acknowledged that there are Green Jobs issues in industrial settings and the health of workers needed to be addressed.
135. On the issue of inter-agency coordination, the speaker felt that the best way to coordinate was at local level. Dr. Hadi added to that by pointing the benefits of having a coordination agency for the multi-sectoral approach. He shared his positive experience with the Indonesian national council on climate change where employment issues were also addressed.

136. The Moderator came back on the issue of the definition of Green Jobs. He distinguished that the definition addressed by the chair was the framework definition of ILO, UNEP and social partners. At the operational level, it would be up to each country to define Green Jobs by sector through national discussion. When it comes to employment-intensive infrastructure programmes, he confirmed that Green Jobs would be defined by the environmental outcomes they contribute to. Jobs associated to green services/products will be Green Jobs for water projects. So are the works involved in the use of environmentally-friendly techniques in MGNREGA to make the work “greener.” He added that as the labour market would see a major transformation with the greening of the economies, the introduction of green skills to traditional jobs would make them green jobs.

137. The Chairperson concluded the session by stating that job creation was the classic focus of developing economies, but the discussion was a good beginning go beyond this and explore how rural employment programmes could contribute to sustainability of the economy.

**Theme panel 3**

**Income Security and Targeting**

138. The Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Labour and Employment of the Government of India gave a brief introduction to the session. Ms. Rosalinda Baldoz, Secretary of Labour and Employment of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines, in her function as Chairperson, introduced the moderator and the panellists of this session. She then gave the floor to Mr. Nguy Chanphal Secretary of State of the Ministry of Interior of the Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

139. The Secretary of State introduced the first presentation with a brief description of the country context and the stages of the development Cambodia has undergone so far: the rehabilitation phase (1993-1998), the reconstruction phase (1999-2003), and the take-off phase (2004-2008). He pointed out that the ongoing financial crisis which started in 2008 poses a severe challenge for the maintenance or enhancement of already achieved levels of social and economic development.

140. He then provided an overview of the existing social safety net programmes emphasizing that most of these programmes were implemented during 1993 and 2000 to provide employment opportunities and income security to the poor, food security, basic health services, basic income security for school-children and social welfare services to the most vulnerable groups. He underlined the importance of public works programmes which generated more than 30 million workdays between 1998 and 2004. In this context, he briefly touched upon the Emergency Food Assistance Project (EFAP) introduced by the Royal Government of Cambodia in 2008 as a response to the global financial and economic crisis. He explained that public works programmes, by generating employment, have a significant poverty reducing effect. He further
noted that common types of public works programmes in Cambodia include rural roads works, irrigation, water supply, drainage, flood protection, soil protection, reforestation, and works related to the cleaning up of the environment.

141. Addressing the issue of targeting, the Secretary of State explained that different targeting mechanisms are applied for different beneficiaries and different interventions. For example, self-targeting is selected for seasonal unemployment and public works, while household targeting and conditional transfers are used for poor families with small children. In addition, categorical targeting is used for specific vulnerable groups and household targeting for poor families. He further explained that the National Identification of Poor Households Programme (ID Poor) is a nationwide targeting mechanism to identify (a) which specific households are poor and (b) which rates of poverty prevail in different geographic areas.

142. The Secretary of State emphasized the importance of social protection as an investment in people and societies. Policy- and decision makers need to recognize that social protection helps build human capital, manage risks, promote investment and entrepreneurship and improve participation in labour markets. Social protection should thus be understood as an economic necessity.

143. Regarding the challenges for social protection, the Secretary of State, identified the following as key: Firstly, there is the challenge of creating sufficient fiscal space for social protection interventions. Furthermore, the cross-cutting nature of social protection calls for policy coherence and coordination among different social policies to prevent individuals and their families from falling into poverty and deprivation. An Information and Knowledge Management (IKM) on social protection is therefore central to support effective coordination. Moreover, close monitoring and evaluation of social protection interventions is key for effective dialogue on social protection. In addition, capacity building at all levels of government needs to be provided to ensure effective and efficient design, implementation and monitoring of social protection policies. Finally, the selection of appropriate targeting mechanisms was identified as a crucial challenge for social protection in Cambodia.

144. In conclusion, the Secretary of State called for a renewed understanding of the interconnectedness of economic and social development, and the need for balanced economic growth. He also emphasised that improving infrastructure within and between countries must be part of a new development paradigm focusing on improved connectivity and accessibility, as well as rapid growth and social and economic development.

145. The Chairperson thanked the Secretary of State for his comprehensive presentation and gave the floor to Ms. Sowmya Kidambi, Director SSAAT of the Government of India (Andhra Pradesh).

146. The speaker introduced her presentation on “Social Aspects of Public Works Employment Programmes – Setting of Wage Levels, Social Audits, Health Insurance – India’s MGNREGA”. Mentioning that the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was enacted by Parliament in 2005, she emphasized that the Act changed the lives of millions of people living in rural India. While there are challenges with regard to its implementation, MGNREGA has created
valuable assets in rural communities changing patterns of agriculture and creating opportunities for sustainable livelihoods. Furthermore, it fostered grass-root democracy through improved transparency and accountability and created equal employment opportunities and wages for women and men thus encouraging women to seek more employment under MGNREGA. It was further emphasized that through the Act, the concept of minimum wage became for the first time a reality in rural India. By linking the wage under MGNREGA to a minimum wage and increasing it in line with inflation, the bargaining power of rural labourers vis-à-vis potential employers was significantly increased.

147. Highlighting the role of social audits for improved implementation of MGNREGA, the speaker pointed out that so far five rounds of social audits were held in around 38,000 villages. As a result of social audits, issues of bonded labour could successfully be addressed and school attendance of children increased. Also she mentioned that other policy changes brought about recently, like installing a service charge for banks for delayed payments, which are then transferred to labourers as compensation, has seen positive results reducing some delays. She concluded by mentioning that the experience of Kenya, South Africa, Mexico, Brazil and Tanzania also helped improve the practice of social audits under MGNREGA.

148. Mr. Hebert Mkhize, Adviser to the Ministry of Labour of the Government of South Africa shared some of the Decent Work elements of the EPWP. He described the programme as a poverty alleviation scheme, targeting the unemployed, either in rural or urban environments, which was established in agreement with the social partners and other institutions participant of the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC). The agreement also included a Code of Good Practice for the implementation of the scheme, where unions committed themselves not to bargaining in favour of participants of the programme.

149. The Council agreed to establishing “compensation levels” – in Mr. Mkhize’s view, “wages” was not the accurate term. The “compensation level” was initially set at 60 Rand and recently revised to 100 Rand. This is reflected in the Ministerial Determination. He mentioned that the graduation strategies still needed strengthening and more focus on the employability of participants. He indicated that the Decent Work elements in the EPWP are mainly those covering in social protection.

150. The Moderator, Mr. Mukesh Gupta, Senior Specialist on Employment Intensive Investments, DWT, ILO New Delhi, summarized the panellists’ intervention noting that the three schemes described as well as other presented in other sessions had shown high degrees of success: they all started as experiments but had upscaled and are successful in their own right in contributing to poverty alleviation. The entry points varied - employment had been an entry point for MGNREGA, social protection in Brazil, and infrastructure development in South Africa - but in all cases the government had addressed the needs of the unemployed. But he acknowledged that there were issues that required further debate, such as the establishment of the compensation or wage level, system for setting of wages in targeted programmes and the impact of the schemes on labour standards and working conditions. As it had been pointed out, the bargaining level of workers had increased; this was especially noted in the case of MGNREGA where minimum wages had been increased. The Moderator indicated that social audits were also key. Social audits proved successful in Andhra
Pradesh and this experience had now been shared with many countries. He concluded that south-south cooperation could be enhanced in many of these issues and discussed by participating countries, and he welcomed any further questions.

151. Ms. Lourdes Transmonte, Acting Secretary of Labour of the Government of the Philippines, enquired whether, in the case of MGNREGA, short term workers were guaranteed social insurance, in particular in case of accidents and how wages are set whenever there is no minimum wage.

152. The representative from the Government of Uganda, Mr. Sulaiman was concerned about the low productivity of the jobs, and the negative effects that the increase of wages in the private sector would have on the industry as a whole, including the relocation of industries to other countries as an effect to the increase in wages.

153. The Adviser on Employment to the Government of South Africa alluded to the ILO that maybe there was a need for an open debate on the effects of public employment and decent work. She indicated that perhaps public employment already meets the decent work criteria. She also enquired why her South African colleague felt that remuneration from public employment programmes could not be considered wage and also noted that this rate was slightly higher than the minimum wages in some sectors, including domestic work. She confirmed that EPWP workers also enjoyed Decent Work benefits, such as the right to compensation, right to insurance, right to protective gear, right hearings in disputes around discipline and unemployment benefits.

154. Mr. Man Bahadur Bishwakarma, Director General of the Government of Nepal requested more information about the effects of MGNREGA on wages and whether MGNREGA had experienced working with machines, noting that the combination of man and machinery could have multiplier effects in terms of productivity.

155. The speaker, the Secretary of State, from the Government of Cambodia in response to the queries from the Government of the Philippines and Nepal, noted that the purpose of the scheme in Cambodia was to generate a second source of income for poor workers, most often agricultural non-skilled workers. He confirmed the wages from PEPs supplement existing wages to fill the slack season. Wages based on market wages do not distort the job market. He was against workers using machinery as part of the scheme, since it presented challenges in terms of ensuring that the wage would be properly shared between the worker and the machine owner. The Cambodian scheme is aimed at creating more employment for the poor, and not the contractors.

156. In response, the speaker from the Government of India (Andhra Pradesh) confirmed that workers have insurance coverage covered by the State. She also stressed that the increase of wages should not be considered a negative side effect of MGNREGA. The high benefits of industry in India should not be based on cheap work perpetuating poverty. There was still an open debate on the level of establishment of the minimum wages and whether they were still enough for a decent leaving, but at least the MGNREGA wages had been indexed with the increase in the consumer price index. She added that studies exist that confirm that during the peak agricultural season, there is a slowdown of workers turning to MGNREGA; and that the questions should
be aimed more about the adequate level of wages for the workers and not so much on the negative impact this may be having on industries.

157. The speaker from the Government of South Africa on his part, clarified that in South Africa the minimum wage in a number of sectors was established by collective bargaining, and for those who did not have bargaining capacity the Government established a minimum wage in consultation with the social partners through the Conditions of Employment Commission.

**Concluding Remarks and Way Forward**

158. The Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Labour and Employment of the Government of India welcomed delegates to the closing session of the Conference.

159. The Minister of Labour and Employment, Government of India began by congratulating the ministers, ambassadors, and officials for their contribution to this conference on South-South Cooperation. He noted that this was the first IBSA Conference of labour ministers, and it had been an opportunity to discuss shared problems and identify indigenous solutions. The Minister stressed the need to further develop south-south and triangular cooperation with the ILO in order to effectively implement the DWA, which can only be achieved through the building of partnerships and exchanging knowledge in the four areas rights, employment, social protection, and social dialogue. He expressed the importance of promoting knowledge sharing with the support of ILO’s technical expertise. More specifically, he highlighted the instrumental role of public employment programmes and guarantee schemes, green jobs and other social protection schemes.

160. The Minister informed the conference that the larger goal is fostering greater solidarity and enhancing equality among countries and people in the world of work. Moreover, countries of the South have been successful in developing innovative solutions to tackling poverty and creating employment such as MGNREGA, Bolsa Familia and EPWP. This Conference has facilitated the exchange of knowledge through this horizontal partnership, which will also help low-income countries develop such schemes. And the ILO has been very proactive to fostering this south-south relationship.

161. The Minister expressed his desire that the participants in the Conference look further into concrete actions based on deliberations of the last two days, including exploring a memorandum of understanding between two or more countries.

162. In conclusion, The Minister informed the Conference that this IBSA conference on South-South Cooperation will lay down the foundation for future cooperation, bringing our countries together to contribute to meeting the aspirations of the working class.

163. The Minister thanked the ministers, ambassadors, officials and delegates from 23 countries, and thanked Mr. Salazar, Dr. Yamamoto, Ms. Staermose and the ILO team for the useful contribution and support. He also expressed his gratitude to Mr. Sarangi, Mr. Pandey and other officers of MOLE for making this Conference a success.
164. Mr. Pandey congratulated all the delegates, and he indicated that this is only the first step towards shaping the destiny of our collective workforce. A process for sharing home-grown solutions to our problems has begun, he noted, rather than blindly copying solutions from advanced economies.

165. Addressing the conclusions of the conference, Mr. Jose Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, ILO Executive Director, Employment, expressed his pleasure of participating in this Conference. He commended the Government of India for organizing the event, which has brought the IBSA countries and 22 delegations from all over the word to discuss Decent Work at the Ministerial level. He stressed that this historic event will strengthen the IBSA Declaration of Intent on South-South Cooperation and Decent Work. He stressed that the important messages on innovative and inclusive public employment policies would be brought back to the ILO Governing Body, through IBSA and the G20. Under this token, he welcomed inputs to the ILO technical cooperation segment of the Governing Body. He highlighted that economic growth has not produced the number of jobs needed to help populations move out of poverty. At this Conference, countries have shared their experiences on how public employment programmes can efficiently complement private sector job creation. He confirmed that this forms an important part of the international policy debate impacting very much on the economic and social development in many countries. And he summarized some of the achievements that should be shared more widely, notably how PEPs have contributed to employability, skills, and entrepreneurship development; how quantity and quality of jobs contribute to ensure decent work through wages and conditions of work; and the ability of these programmes to contribute to the productive role of assets and services.

166. The Representative of the ILO, Mr. Salazar-Xirinachs, also mentioned that with the support of many of the countries present and in collaboration with the International Training Centre in Turin, the ILO has developed an international course to facilitate the exchange of these experiences to highlight the innovations in PEPs. He concluded by thanking the Minister for his leadership and organization. On behalf of the ILO Director General, he expressed his gratitude to all delegates for their participation and thanked them for their trust in the ILO as a partner in facing all these challenges.

167. Dr. Sachiko Yamamoto, ILO Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific congratulated the Government of India and all the countries for sharing their home-grown, innovative, pragmatic solutions in the field of public employment programmes and social protection. She stressed that many countries recognize the role of public employment programmes in times of economic crisis and as a means to provide minimum social protection to the most vulnerable populations.

168. The Representative of the ILO, Dr. Yamamoto, informed the Conference that these two days demonstrated that all countries have made great progress in implementing their DWA and have developed a wealth of knowledge which could be shared within the region and at the global level. The Representative of the ILO reminded participants that the Asia Pacific Regional Meeting concluded in Kyoto in December last year adopted knowledge-sharing as one of the key priorities of the ILO and member countries in Asia Pacific. This Conference only reaffirms that the Asia Pacific Region is a fertile ground for
developing and sharing knowledge covering the four pillars of the DWA namely rights at work, employment, social protection and social dialogue.

169. Moreover, The Representative of the ILO noted that ILO Asia Pacific’s effort to promote information sharing among the constituents is being assisted by the office-wide initiative to improve the ILO’s capacity for knowledge management to promote Decent Work. She underscored that the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific stands ready to continue providing technical support, in close collaboration with the ILO Office in New Delhi, to strengthen south-south cooperation within the IBSA framework.

170. The Ambassador of the Government of Brazil to India, along with previous speakers, stressed that this event is a path-breaking initiative, particularly since the Declaration of Intent was only signed in 2010. Reflecting the discussions of the last two years, he outlined two key messages: 1) countries are ready to share experiences; and 2) a follow-up is important and necessary. In terms of the latter, a follow-up event will take place to bring other countries of the South together to share their experiences, with support of the ILO. Overall, this high-level attendance attests to the interest and prospect of this engagement. He endorsed the statements of previous speakers and thanked the hosts for their support. He confirmed that IBSA countries will continue to contribute to working towards a new world, envisaging greater cooperation among developing countries.

171. Mr. Herbert Mkhize, Advisor to the Minister of Labour of Government of South Africa also expressed his gratitude to the hosts for the hospitality and thanked the experts for their technical inputs. He stated his optimism that through close cooperation anything can be achieved.

172. The Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Labour and Employment Government of India concluded that there is a need for a roadmap to guide future work and that over the past two days there have been a number of problems and issues raised. The conclusion from these two days will show the path ahead, he said.

173. Dr. Mrutyunjay Sarangi, Secretary of the Ministry of Labour and Employment of the Government of India thanked delegates, the ILO, and government officials, which have made this event a useful and fruitful conference. He stressed that all countries are facing similar challenges such as the global slowdown, along with the frustration of youth and unorganized workers. Delegates came together at this Conference to discuss these problems and to address their response in terms of social protection, decent work, and occupational safety and health through public employment programmes, also keeping the environmental balance in mind. It is important to share these indigenous innovations to contribute to sustainable inclusive growth. The Secretary stressed that public employment programmes like MGNREGA are necessary to fill the employment gaps and to provide supplementary work when full time work is not available. He also mentioned that programmes such as the Skills Development Initiative is another area that the Government of India is focusing on through the Ministry of Labour and Employment.

174. Through IBSA, the Secretary informed the Conference that developing countries have embarked on a path to promote cooperation. He stressed that a draft plan of
action/common intentions for South-South Cooperation has been prepared, and would be used to focus direction and future activities. This draft commits to the following:

(i) To further develop and promote south-south and triangular cooperation according to countries’ priorities - in order to contribute effectively to the implementation of the Decent Work Agenda and its four strategic objectives through the building of partnerships and exchanging of experiences in the fields of employment, social protection, rights at work and social dialogue;
(ii) To enhance policy dialogue and exchanges between India, Brazil, South Africa and all countries of the South and the ILO;
(iii) To better appreciate the range of policy issues relevant to public employment programmes / employment guarantees, green jobs, conditional cash transfers and other innovative social protection schemes;
(iv) To provide and obtain guidance on the design of effective policies and programmes and exchange these experiences among countries of the South;
(v) To take concrete actions, which can take the form of MoUs between two or more countries;
(vi) To support and work with ILO’s South-South and Triangular Cooperation Initiative to foster greater solidarity and enhance equality among countries and peoples in the world of work.

175. As final concluding remarks, the Director-General, VV Giri National Labour Institute, Mr. Yajurvedi, expressed his gratitude for the presence of the Minister Kharge and ministers of participating countries from Asia, Africa and Latin America. He also thanked Dr. Sarangi for his leadership and all the delegates for the fruitful deliberations. He thanked the ILO and other officials for their crucial role in supporting the conference and expressed his thanks to Mr. Pandey and his team for their efforts. With this, the Conference came to an end.