



Report of Proceedings of Biennial Delegate Conference

**INEC Conference Centre,
Killarney, Co. Kerry**

4-7 July 2011

**INEC CONFERENCE CENTRE
KILLARNEY, CO KERRY**

July 4 – 7, 2011

**Monday 4 July
Afternoon Session**

**Opening of Conference
16.30 – 17.15**

Jack O'Connor, President of Congress

Delegates, can you take your seats and we will get proceedings underway. Take your seats delegates please.

Good afternoon delegates, observers and guests to the Biennial Delegate Conference 2011. I welcome you all here to our conference in Killarney and before we proceed formally, lest we have an unforeseen development, we will invite Peter Rigney, Industrial Officer of Congress to explain the quick way out if things go otherwise than according to plan.

Peter Rigney, Industrial Officer, Congress

Thank you President. The emergency exits are on the left and right hand side of the hall, both on the ground floor and on the first floor. The toilets are at the back of the hall on the right hand side as you are facing now. And, finally, could you all take out your mobile phones, don't rely on memory, and please either switch it off or silence it. Thank you very much.

Jack O'Connor, President of Congress

Thank you Peter.

Thank you delegates. No applause. I hope the film was as good as it sounded.

Now I want to declare the conference formally open and I want to call on the Mayor of Killarney Town Council, who is also the President of Killarney Trades Council, Sean Counihane to address conference. Sean is a Labour Party Councillor and is also chair of the local board of management of the Congress Centres Network, so Mayor, Sean Counihane.

Sean Counihane, Mayor of Killarney/President of Killarney Trades Council

Delegates, it is a great honour for me as Labour Party Mayor of Killarney to welcome the Congress of Trade Unions in to the town again. There was a particular time in Killarney's history when we used to have conferences every other day. Unfortunately, a lot of the hotels in the town choose to disengage with us, but that is their loss, that is another story.

I hope that the few days that you are here amongst us, just across the way from the National Park, and weather permitting and you have a fairly full agenda, weather permitting you might get an opportunity to have a look to see what the beauty Killarney really is. It is a national park so don't be afraid to use it – there is no charge.

Delegates, I had a few words written out that I might say and I changed my mind because I felt that what I had written may be a small bit too intelligent and would sound intelligent. I think this is where we might be losing the war in relation to the rank and file people out there and that are unemployed. We need to engage with the people we represent. We don't need to be engaging with right wing economists and pretending that we are smarter than them. We are losing the PR war, let's get back and represent the people that we have done so all our lives and speak the terminology that they understand. It is not right wing economist throughout the length and breadth of this country, people like Patricia Callanan, who keeps on about the JLCs, ask the workers in the towns when you go into the restaurants. Ask them what about the JLCs. And, it is very worthwhile and the Taoiseach will be here later, and I had a word with him earlier today, I think it is no harm to explain to him that when you talk about JLCs, it can't stop there. You are actually making an attack on social welfare when you are attacking the JLCs.

I smile sometimes when I see the politicians at the moment and they clapping each other in the back for reducing PRSI to employers. I work with the local employment service and every day I am dealing with people who are absolutely devastated because they can't acquire work. They are devastated because they are afraid of losing their homes; they are devastated because they won't be able to afford to send their children to college. These are the things that the people on the street want to hear us talking about and I assure you that there is no right wing economist, whether it is Colm McCarthy, whether it is someone like Patricia Callanan, ever going to give the working class people that we represent what they desire. Delegates, I am not going to stay up here preaching to the converted. I spent many years myself, I am a member of SIPTU for over 40 something years, I spent many years sitting down there, I have every trust in you the delegates to fight the right fight and that the general public out there listen to committed trade unionists. We will turn this country around together. Thank you very much.

Jack O'Connor, President of Congress

Thank you Mayor, thank you Sean for that address.

And now we want to proceed to the election of four Tellers and I propose the following people as Tellers, five Tellers, Annette Dolan, TUI, Paul McSweeney of the CPSU, Pat Bolger, IMPACT, Ray Rafferty, UNISON and Seamus de Paor, ASTI. Is it agreeable that those people serve as Tellers? Is that agreed? Agreed.

And, now for the election of Scrutineers and I want to propose the following people as Scrutineers: Jimmy Whelan, UNITE, John Kelleher, AHCPS, Kate Farrelly, IBOA, Billy Hannigan, PSEU and Kieran Jack McGinley, SIPTU. Is agreeable that those people act as Scrutineers? Is that agreed? Agreed.

And, now I want to call on the Chair of Standing Orders, Michael Sharp to move Standing Orders Reports No. 1 and 2. Michael.

Michael Sharpe, Chair of Standing Orders Committee

Thanks President. Good afternoon Conference. Michael Sharpe, Chair of Standing Orders Committee.

Standing Orders Committee Report No. 1 contained in your Agenda document, pages 34-35, 36. Most of it, practically all of it is standard for many of you who have been at the conference before, I will just run through the provisions. Item 1 deals with the time of the session. Please note them because we have a change in conference timing this year compared to previous years so please note carefully the session. Item 2 deals with the election of officers and you will note that that there is only one nomination for President, Eugene McGloone so he is therefore deemed elected. There are only two nominations for Vice President, John Douglas and Patricia King, therefore, they are both deemed elected and only one nomination for Treasurer, Joe O'Flynn, therefore, and he is deemed elected.

There were originally 34 nominations for the 30 seats on the Executive Council. That, as we can see from the Standing Orders Report, has since been reduced to 32, two people have stood down. That part deals with the method of election which is standard and you will be familiar with it from previous years. Standing Orders Committee has received only four nominations, in fact I think there is a 5th in Standing Orders Committee No. 2, there was a 5th in Standing Orders Committee and two for Trades Councils so there will be an election. The arrangement for distribution of ballot papers is there. Please note them carefully. We will come back to that in further reports. The various motions and amendments have been looked at. They are all in order so hopefully there will be no contention about that.

Can I draw your attention particularly to Item 4.2. This is new. To take into account the fact that we do have different times to normal and to prevent against the possibility of having to reduce speaking times which is something we have had to do in the past to get all the motions and we don't particularly want to do it, so for that reason we are putting in provision 4.2 where we are just asking, and I stress we are just asking, it is not an instruction, we are not in any way seeking to curtail debate, that particularly where motions are non contentious, that unions would confine themselves to just one speaker on the subject and that gives us more time to discuss those motions which are contentious and which need to be teased out and need to have both sides hears. So, I would ask you to provide for that particular provision.

As usual in Item 5, there are specific measures for the suspension of Standing Orders and Item 6 deals with the conference sessions.

There are also a number of fraternal guests and speakers and they are listed in Item 7. So, that, President is Standing Orders Committee Report No. 1 which I move.

Jack O'Connor, SIPTU & President of Congress

Thank you Michael. Is there a seconder? Formally seconded by Seamus Dooley. And, now if you move to Standing Orders Report No. 2.

Michael Sharpe, Chair of Standing Orders Committee

Ok, Standing Orders Committee Report No. 2. Again most of it is pretty standard. Item 1 deals with the invited speakers and the various Congress speakers and identifying where on the agenda they will speak. In particular could I draw your attention to 1.1 where we will be addressed shortly by the Taoiseach and on Wednesday by An Tánaiste and if you look at the agenda you will find that An Tánaiste is due to speak immediately after lunch on Wednesday so in deference to him could I stress that people return promptly to the conference at that time.

Item 1.4 – Standing Orders wishes to report and advise conference on a number of provisions relating to the report of the Commission on the Trade Union Movement, the address by Sr Staniclaus Kennedy, and an address by Ms Bernadette Sègol, General Secretary of the ETUC. Item 1.5 deals with the Roundtable Debate which you will see on your agenda is *Which Way for Europe?*

Paragraph 2 deals with the election of the Executive Council, just point out that there have been as I said earlier, there have been two withdrawals from the original nominations, there are now only 32 candidates.

In Item 3 there is an Emergency Motion standing in the name of the Executive Council. This is dealing with the Commission on the Trade Union Movement which is to be discussed and the Emergency Motion is simply to provide for that provision and provide a way forward so that will be discussed at that time.

Item 4 deals with the various display stands which are outside and we urge delegates to visit them and partake at what is available there.

Item 5 deals with the Fringe Meetings. In 5.1 you will see that there was a list of fringe meetings circulated with your documentation. Since then in Item 5.2 there is one other fringe meeting, 'Stop the Extradition of Sean Garland Campaign' which Standing Orders Committee has agreed will be held and that will be held on 5th July following the adjournment of conference.

At this point could I also mention a document on Global Solidarity which should be in your packs, I think it has been circulated or if it hasn't, it will be shortly, which we have approved for circulation.

Could I also mention in the context of meetings, there is a meeting for Trades Council delegates in the Brehon 2 Room immediately after conference this evening. So, for Trades Council delegates, the Brehon 2 Room immediately after conference this evening.

We have looked at the list of delegates and they are all in order and they can be inspected in the Conference Office should anyone wish to do so.

That, President, is Standing Orders Report No. 2 which I move.

Jack O'Connor, SIPTU & President of Congress

Thank you Michael. Is there a seconder? Formally seconded by Peter MacMenamin.

Now, do we have speakers on either of those reports? Any speakers offering? No speakers offering, so I am going to put Standing Orders Report No. 1 to the floor. Is it agreed? Standing Orders Report No. 1 is agreed.

I am putting Standing Orders Report No. 2 to the floor. Is it agreed? Agreed. Thank you Michael.

And now I want to call on the General Secretary, David Begg to introduce the Executive Council Report and to welcome the delegates, the guests and the guest speakers, our fraternal delegates and speakers. So, David Begg, General Secretary.

David Begg, General Secretary of Congress

Thanks very much indeed President and as Jack said, I want to welcome all our guests, our fraternal delegates and indeed you the delegates to conference. I think the report of Standing Orders has identified exactly who the personalities are that are visiting us are and they will be introduced to us during the various stages, but I want them all to know that they have a very warm welcome from Killarney and I hope they have an enjoyable stay.

I want to take the opportunity if I may just to thank all of yourselves for the work which you have done in the last couple of years particularly. You are the collective leadership of the trade union movement and it is a leadership which is confronted now by challenges which I don't think any other generation of leaders in recent history have had to confront. I think every decision we make this week has to be calibrated to reflect the extraordinary times that we face just at the moment. And, in the introduction to the Report, we tried to list what those key events have been over the last couple of years. The re-emergence of unemployment and immigration and the fact that 300,000 of our fellow countrymen and women are without employment since we met together on the last occasion. The collapse virtually of the whole construction industry and retrenchment in retail, banking and to some extent manufacturing, increased levels of outsourcing from even very profitable companies in the economy – the likes of Vodafone who last year made a profit here in Ireland of €125 million who nevertheless are proceeding to outsource jobs to Egypt and to India. We have seen massive cutbacks in public expenditure and investments and not surprisingly arising from that, a very significant drop in the wealth of the country – the Gross National Product from about €180 billion in 2008 to approximately €128 billion this year. We have seen, as you know, the attacks on the minimum wage which thankfully were restored by the new Government. We are also currently dealing with the difficulties affecting the Joint Labour Committees and the Registered Employment Agreements. And, apart from the fact that in many respects, in many industries we have been able to prevent the erosion of wages, it is a fact that right across the economy additional taxes of one sort or another effectively means that the income and purchasing power of the citizens of this State have been seriously reduced.

As we know also, many, many people are trying to deal with enormous levels of private debt, leaving aside the public and sovereign debt of the country and these people are confronted with increased interest rates now from the European Central Bank.

We have, as you know, suffered the collapse of the normal system of dealing with these things since the social partnership model no longer exists and indeed we have seen very

sustained attacks on the public service including the semi-state companies. It is quiet interesting because in February of this year one of the more central right bodies in Europe – the Schuman Foundation brought forward a report in the course of which they said that the difference between Greece and Ireland is that in the case of Greece the problems and failings of the public sector brought down the private sector of the economy but in the case of Ireland it was the private sector that brought down and caused the problems for the public sector. This is a distinction which is rarely heard in public discourse in the country and I think it is something which we have to continuously challenge. The public policy response to the problems we have had have really largely been concerned with the implementation of deflationary policies, indeed both here in the Republic of Ireland and in Northern Ireland. And in terms how that has affected us, it has affected us hugely of course in terms of the loss of jobs for people, strangely I suppose in the loss of trade union membership, the numbers are not as high as one might have expected. We are down about 19,000 on our figures and paradoxically union density, the rate at which we are representative of the working population as a whole, has actually increased but I guarantee that you won't see much commentary on that in the papers even though it was a big feature of the last 10 years that density was in fact decreasing.

Colleagues, I think it is extremely important for us to be able to correctly interpret these events and to make our policies and our decisions accordingly. You know, our problems have not really begun in the last three years if you think about it. They began maybe 20 years ago when maybe certain changes took place in the world. At that time the powers that be were able to use low interest rates, I am thinking particularly now of the recession which came in the early part of 2000, to stimulate the debt driven recovery after the .com bubble collapsed and they were able to keep inflation down as they thought by cheap imports from China and another factor which was a change in the balance of power between capital and labour. And the change in the balance of power was brought about because 20 years ago you had China becoming capitalist by decree and entering into the global markets, India going the same way and Eastern Europe the same way. And the net effect of all of that was to take in 1.5 billion extra workers on top of a workforce, an industrial workforce, of about 950 billion. You can clearly see how that created much different conditions which altered the way which things affect us in a negative kind of way. And, the result has been seen now with the increasing inequality in society. You know, Ben Bernanke, the top man in the Fed in the United States, coined the phrase 'The Great Moderation' described what was happening. And, it was essentially a belief that stability in the world, the end of boom and bust, could be achieved by policy alone. We now know that that is not the case. That what happened in China is a transitory effect basically and we know that the cheap credit model has also collapsed. And the interesting for us, that means that there is one pillar of that three pillar equation left and it is the essential conflict if you like between capital and labour, and it may take many, many years to work out. And, while much effort, conviction and so on has gone into news bins and into radio and television trying to say really that the trade union movement is irrelevant in these modern times, actually the truth is the direct opposite of that. The outcome of this struggle will have profound effects for society. As I mentioned growing inequality represented by some figures published in Britain a couple of weeks ago which showed that for the FTSE 100 companies the difference – the rate if you like, the multiplier between the Chief Executive and the ordinary person working in those companies was now 145 whereas in 1999 it 69 times. That is the increasing gap and what is particularly notable about it is that gap is no longer opening up between people who are working on

the factory floor – it is opening up between the middle class and the people who are at the absolute top of society. And, the middle classes are the people who assimilated this idea of individual aspiration and really the core value of neoliberalism. So these are fantastically interesting times and how this will play out for the future none of us really know.

But we have, I think, this week to try to do something to chart a course so that we can prepare our movement to deal with these challenges. And, let me just enumerate some of the things that have been happening so far, some of the things we have tried to do. We have had a fairly radical restructuring of the Secretariat of Congress in order to deal with the post partnership situation. We have established an Economic Research Unit which will be up and running in September and correspondingly we have significantly lowered the numbers of people working in what we call the 'normal' business of Congress. We have established the Trade Union Commission which will be reporting to you later in the course of the week. We have established a Communications Strategy Group in order to better communicate our message to the population of the country as a whole. We have continued our advocacy of the Better Fairer Way Campaign, we have even taken on board bilateral meetings on a number of European countries in the current crisis to explain to our colleagues in the trade union movement there what is the Irish perspective of the worker and what is happening in this country. At an industrial level, as you know, we have tried to stabilise the situation, to try to contain the problems. To first of all the negotiation of the Croke Park Agreement, the protocol with IBEC for the private sector, the various public protests that we have mounted against austerity, the Union Connect Scheme which was instrumental in taking up the fight for the Davenport workers with SIPTU, the current battle of the JLCs and Registered Employment Agreement, the strong input we made at the General Election Campaign and the success we did achieve in reversing the minimum wage cut and the way we have commissioned a rebuttal in detail for the semi-state companies of the McCarthy Report. But what we face is one in which the struggle will intensify for the future and we do have to find a way of grappling with this shift in the balance of power that I have mentioned. Otherwise, inequality will increase and people will find that society is a less accommodating place to live in.

European politicians at the moment are worrying very much about the economics of the current debate. They need to actually worry about the politics of the current State because they are creating conditions which as a society is the victim of what is happening and cannot easily be restored in the way that it was previously. So now for our part I think we have tried to contain the problem, we have reported on them in that vein, we need your guidance about what to do in the coming two years and I hope colleagues that you will all have a fruitful couple of days here in Killarney and fruitful and good deliberations to guide us for the future.

Jack O'Connor, SIPTU & President of Congress

Thank you David for that address of welcome and you have decided one thing – how I am going to spend my evening because as a result of your address I have to rewrite my Presidential Address tomorrow.

We are going to proceed now to the next item of business on the agenda which is the address by our invited guest and I am going to hand to hand over to the Vice President, Eugene McGlone to take you through the next period.

Eugene McGlone, UNITE and Vice President of Congress

I think Jack you are only doing that because there is nothing to be done – you don't trust me. There is a short film to be shown again while we wait on An Taoiseach to be brought into the hall by Jack and David, so can we have this please.

Since you liked it so much we are going to show it again! The music is nice. We are going to roll it again, I think.

Jack O'Connor, SIPTU & President of Congress

Well delegates, sorry about that brief delay. I believe that the Vice President did a wonderful job in my absence and you have seen all the films.

I now want to proceed to introduce our invited guest to address conference. He is a man who has demonstrated tremendous determination throughout his life not least yesterday morning when he cycled, I think 120 kilometres or something, miles! We don't use the miles here but of course we do in the other jurisdiction on the island so it is still relevant. He is a man who has demonstrated tremendous determination. He now leads the Government, a coalition Government, with the largest majority in the history of the State and of course he has come in to office facing the most serious economic challenges ever faced by anyone who holds the office that he holds. And whatever about differences we might have from time to time, we do have to acknowledge the enthusiasm and the energy he has displayed in assuming that office. I want now to invite the Taoiseach of the Republic of Ireland, Deputy Enda Kenny, TD to address conference.

An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, TD

President of Congress, Jack O'Connor, General Secretary, David Begg, delegates and friends.

I am very pleased to have the opportunity to address you at the beginning of your Delegate Conference here in Killarney. We meet at a critical time for the future of our country. You and I have a shared commitment to the well-being of the people of this island, especially those at work or looking for work. I want to outline to you here this afternoon what my Government is determined to do to resolve this crisis, and how we can work together to make that happen.

This Government, as your President has pointed out, has been given an unprecedented majority. The people have entrusted us with the task of fixing our broken economy and re-establishing our economic independence, while restoring trust in society and respect in the international community. That is the task. It has to be done, urgently and comprehensively.

Let me assure you this afternoon: I am up for this challenge. The Government will not fail the people. We have begun with energy and determination, and that is how we will continue.

The crisis that we face has many strands to it: the NESC described it as a five-part crisis, and they were right. We have to stabilise the public finances, we have to restore

economic growth, we have to fix the banking system, we have to deal with the employment challenge and all of its social consequences, and we have to deal with the reputational damage incurred by the country, by many of our institutions and by politics and public administration.

I am under no illusion about the scale of the challenge. But I know that avoiding it, deferring it, or equivocating on the scale of it, is pointless. The Irish people know that. You know it, and the members of trade unions right around this country know it.

We cannot change the past but we can influence our own futures, above all by doing what it takes to restore our economic independence, so that we have control of our own affairs without being dependent on the wishes or the approval of outsiders.

We need to build the confidence required to enable us to re-enter the financial markets, as lenders accept our capacity to run our own affairs. That means making the necessary adjustments to ensure that our spending and revenue are on a sustainable path, while we make the structural changes to restore competitiveness and make Ireland an even more successful location for investment, enterprise and jobs.

We have met all of our obligations to date to our funding partners under the Programme of Assistance. We will continue to do so. We will take the necessary steps to bring spending into line with our capacity to fund it, and we will enhance the revenue base of the State in ways which are fair, sustainable and facilitate growth and employment.

The decisions we will have to take are not easy, and we know that many will not be popular. But I can promise you this: they will be fair, they will be balanced, and they will support our strategy of getting the country back to work.

As you know we have embarked on a comprehensive review of public spending to help us in this process. For the first time, we are looking rigorously and in the round at all aspects of spending. Nothing is excluded from consideration. We will probably conclude that there are some things that the country simply cannot afford, and they will be dropped. There are some things that we cannot afford unless they are done very differently, at a lower cost, and they will be changed. There are some things which may be better done by the private sector or the voluntary sector, within a framework set by the Government, and we will be focused on the ends, rather than the means.

And there are undoubtedly other things which the country needs and which only a well-managed and cost-effective public service can provide. These will be maintained, and expanded where necessary.

We also need to consider whether assets that are owned by the State are producing the best social and economic results, or whether they would be better placed into other hands, where investment and innovation are more likely to be possible, for the common good. A careful objective assessment of that option is also taking place. You are aware of our commitments in the Programme for Government in this regard.

How we fund activities which are necessary in the public interest must also be considered. The Government's position on income tax rates is clear. But there are many other sources

of revenue, and there are sources of revenue which many other countries rely upon, and which we will introduce as part of a balanced and fair system for funding necessary public services. At the heart of our efforts is the maintenance and creation of jobs. While showing some signs of stabilisation, the reality is that the number of those who are unemployed is simply far too high. Equally unacceptable is the continuing fall in the numbers employed. The economic and fiscal crisis leaves the Government with little room for manoeuvre. But within those limits, within those constraints, we have introduced a Jobs Initiative to help restore confidence in the economy and generate some momentum.

Here in Killarney it's appropriate to note that a central focus of our efforts is the tourism sector. This year we have already seen growth in the sector: trips to Ireland for the first three months of 2011 increased by almost 9% compared to last year. We want to build on this progress. That is why we have reduced the level of VAT on a range of tourism-related services from 13.5% to 9% with effect from last Friday. This new 9% rate will apply to restaurant and catering services, hotel and holiday accommodation, and entertainment services like cinemas, theatres, museums and amusement parks. It is essential that every business reflect the VAT reduction in their prices, immediately, and in full.

Last week I also launched the Visa Waiver Scheme – perhaps the most radical change in Irish immigration policy since the coming of the Single Market. This will encourage more visitors from emerging markets to come to Ireland.

As part of the Jobs Initiative we also halved employers' PRSI on jobs paying up to €356 per week. This will reduce the cost to employers of sustaining existing jobs, and of creating new ones. We have also provided an extra €40 million for the 2011 School Summer Works Scheme, and an extra €75m for shovel ready transport projects to help create and sustain jobs.

Given the demands placed upon the hard-pressed taxpayers of this country, there must be absolute clarity that the Irish public service is operating to the highest possible standards, at the lowest possible unit cost. Any excess cost means unmet needs among our citizens, unreasonable pressure on under-resourced public services, and a delay in achieving the economic and social goals which we all share. That is why the full implementation of the terms and the spirit of the Croke Park Agreement is so important.

I recently met with the Chairman and members of the Implementation Body for that Agreement. I congratulated them on their work to date and I commended the public service unions and their members for the scale of the adjustments which have already taken place. I share their view that there has been much unfair and unreasonable criticism of the Irish public service over recent years. I acknowledge the hard work and commitment, and indeed the flexibility and innovation of so many public servants across all the branches of our system.

But I am equally aware of the frustration, and even despair of many committed public servants at the outdated structures, the inadequate processes, the fragmentation and arcane work practices which blight their working lives and frustrate our objective to have the highest quality public services available to those who need them.

That is why nothing less than public service transformation is required. It is why the Government established a new Department of Public Expenditure and Reform to provide effective and focused political leadership for the task of managing change. The progress to date under the Croke Park Agreement has been impressive, but it is only the beginning. If we are to maintain the agreed framework of Croke Park – and the Government is fully committed to doing so – then we must have the pace and scale of change that makes honouring those commitments possible.

There is an onus on management and staff at all levels of the public service to make the Croke Park Agreement work in their own areas of activity. There is an onus on those who manage the system at senior levels to make the changes that can only be made at a strategic level, to liberate the rest of the system to get on with delivering services and programmes, knowing they have the support of world-class back-up systems.

Our future has to be based on facing into, embracing and indeed driving change, rather than resisting it. I can give you this assurance: a public service and its representatives that embrace this change, that recognise that the public interest and their own long-run interest are one and the same, that show the determination and creativity of which I know they are capable, will find in me their best champion, and their most willing partner.

In addition to reducing expenditure and increasing revenue, the task of this Government is to accelerate recovery and renew growth in the economy. And there is much to give us confidence in this task. The impressive performance of our export sector, the quality and dynamism of our tourism sector, the skills and flexibility of our people, the international outlook of our business community: all of these have been evident over recent months. The return to growth is slow and has yet to impact on our unemployment problem. But we know the path ahead. We know it involves not only restoring competitiveness, but making the structural changes to maintain it. That's why it is critical that banks not only demonstrate that they have new credit to lend, but demonstrate that it is actually happening for new business and new jobs.

Some of the necessary change is painful. I acknowledge that workers across the public and the private sectors have, in many cases, had to accept significant reductions in their earnings in order to sustain jobs. Work practices, staffing levels and settled ways of doing things have all been challenged and, in many cases, totally transformed. I acknowledge the constructive spirit in which trade unions and their members have met that challenge when faced with incontrovertible evidence about the risks to employment.

Of course, the burden of adjustment should not fall on ordinary workers alone. At its first meeting the Government reduced the pay of the Taoiseach and Ministers, and most recently Minister Howlin has brought in further reforms to the highest levels of public sector, including the pay and bonuses of semi state chief executives. Senior managers have to set an example, not just in the public service, but right across the economy. We are all in this together. We all have to play our part and show example in how we approach our own responsibilities. Those who neglect to play their part can expect no sympathy from this Government. That goes for those operating in sheltered sectors of the economy, in the professions and in other areas where extraordinarily high incomes have persisted even in this time of deep recession. That has to change, and it will change.

Both the cost of living and the cost of doing business in Ireland remain too high. Such high costs and prices remain a barrier to strong economic recovery.

There has been, rightly, a lot of focus on changes in the way in which wages are set and regulated. At a national level, I know that there has been a continuing dialogue between Congress and employers in the private sector, just as the Croke Park Agreement has provided a framework for partnership in the public service. Wage determination is primarily a matter for the parties, whether at national or local level. The Government, for its part, has no ideological position on how wage bargaining should be structured, and we will continue to dialogue with all sides in exploring how this should evolve over the months and years ahead.

But I will say this: how we behave in the labour market, how wages evolve by comparison with our competitors, and how costs generated within the economy evolve over time are critically important for recovery and jobs. The approaches taken by employers, trade unions and the Government should be consistent with each other and with the objective needs of an economy struggling to recover and grow employment. That is the imperative.

How we organise ourselves to achieve it is a matter for a discussion in which I am happy to participate.

I want to comment briefly on the ongoing discussion about the regulation of pay and conditions in certain sectors. First of all, let me say there should be no ambiguity about where the Government stands on the protection of vulnerable workers. This is the Government that insisted on reversing the unwarranted cut in the National Minimum Wage. We felt that was unfair and unnecessary, and we acted. That required a renegotiation of the EU IMF Memo of Understanding

When it comes to the wage-setting machinery of Joint Labour Committees, Employment Regulation Orders and Registered Employment Agreements, the fact is that everyone has long accepted the need for change. That has been the common view of employers and Congress for some time.

The radically altered circumstances of recent years have turned that into an imperative for radical change. The thrust of the reform agenda has to be to retain employment and create new jobs. The sectors and occupations where the greatest job losses have occurred in the economy generally coincide with the sectors where statutory minimum wages are most prevalent. 82% of the fall in employment in the first quarter of this year was in the retail, accommodation and hospitality sectors. The categories of workers covered by Employment Regulation Orders are most vulnerable precisely because they suffer the highest rates of unemployment. While demand in these sectors is clearly a key factor, labour costs represent a relatively high proportion of total output costs in these locally traded sectors. We must not only stem the haemorrhage of jobs in these sectors but we must move to generate new job opportunities. Our commitment to fairness to those on low incomes must embrace those locked out of employment opportunities. We must move quickly and decisively to ensure that our labour market institutions are reformed so that they respond appropriately to this crisis of unemployment.

The analysis carried out in the Duffy/Walsh Report, the submissions made by interested parties and the discussions which have been held by Minister Richard Burton have all been a valuable input to clarifying the shape of the radical changes which are most appropriate to our current conditions. The Government have not yet reached a conclusion about the precise changes to be made, but it is clear that there is a very large measure of common ground. Our decision will be a careful and measured one, taking account of all of the important considerations which have been legitimately put forward by the Congress and others.

This is a time of great change. That much is clear. Indeed, I note that you are discussing at this Conference changes in the way the Congress itself is organised and does its business.

When I addressed the National Economic and Social Council recently, I said that this Government does not have all the answers, and neither does the public service that works on our behalf. We are open to ideas from every quarter in framing our policies in order to achieve our goals and honour our commitments in the Programme for Government. In that context, I want to assure you, members of ICTU at this congress, that I am very much open to the views of Congress on the many issues of concern to you. Let that message be very clear. The Government I lead has an open door to Congress, to the trade unions, in respect of the concerns they have and the messages of discussion that they want to have with us.

And why would I not be open? The Irish Congress of Trade Unions is the largest civil society organisation on this island. Your members are at work across every sector of the economy, in every part of the country and at all levels of skill and experience. The Government is extremely interested in your views, and that of your members, that flow from that range of experience and knowledge.

There are many arrangements and institutions through which that contribution is being made, in the industrial relations and training areas in particular and, in my own Department's area of activity, through the work of the National Economic and Social Council.

It may be that formal Social Partnership Agreements are not appropriate at this time. But I recognise that social partnership is a status which derives, not from formal agreements, but from the role played by key interests in civil society, including the trade unions. That is a valuable European tradition and I will uphold it. In particular, I plan to follow up on my recent meeting with your President, your Vice President and your General Secretary with further meetings to review the broad areas of mutual interest and concern, so that a good dialogue and a structured dialogue can take place with a whole-of-government perspective. I propose to engage with the other social partners in a similar spirit.

In concluding my address this afternoon, and in wishing you well in your deliberations over the rest of this Conference here in the Gleneagle, I want to encourage you, as representatives of your members all across this island, to approach your task with energy, ambition and confidence, which no doubt you will. I applaud the work of the Congress as an all-island body for its steadfast championing of peace and reconciliation across many

troubled and vulnerable communities and the resolute rejection of sectarianism and violence.

I would like to congratulate you Eugene on your election as President. I wish you the very best in that role. I would also like to acknowledge the work of your outgoing President Mr Jack O'Connor. He has been a very effective, articulate President and I wish him well.

The economic challenges which we face as a people are daunting, but they can and they will be mastered. That is our common challenge and it has to be our common conviction.

I look forward to continued interaction with the members of trade unions, the members of ICTU and Congress in the challenge that lies ahead and as a consequence in respect of the decisions that we have to make. Please understand that I value your input into that, and as I said to ICTU, in so far as the opportunity to bring to the attention of Government issues of concern or anxiety or whatever across that spectrum, the door there is open if not in the same way as previously, in the light of the changed circumstances in which we find ourselves.

I applaud too the challenge that lies ahead. I believe in our country, I believe in our people, I believe in the Irish capacity to deal with adversity. I come from a part of the country where from knee high, there was either a dependence on the sea or immigration and though the Irish people have always dealt with adversity in a practical way, God forbid we haven't been hit by a tsunami or an earthquake, or any of these natural disasters. What affects us now is an economic challenge and we are going to master that. The difficulties and the challenges closing the budget deficit are real. The next 15 to 18 months a crucial for the next 50 years of our country. My remit is to sort it out and I expect and want to do that in a fair, understanding and balanced fashion so that the next generation coming behind us will have a future in this country if that is where they want to live. You have got a real part to play in that and I know you won't let yourselves down and for my part, we are willing to respond in the context in which we set out the challenge and the achievements that everyone can have.

Thanks very much indeed.

Jack O'Connor, SIPTU & President of Congress

Thank you Taoiseach and I now want to invite David Begg, General Secretary to respond to the Taoiseach's speech.

David Begg, General Secretary of Congress

Well Taoiseach I want to thank you very much for your presence here with us today and indeed by your remarks and the thoughtful nature of the address which you have just set before Congress.

I noted a couple of things particularly in your speech which I think have never actually been recognised by anybody to date in relation to this crisis or more generally. First of all the point you make about the nature of the crisis – the five part nature of the crisis – which was set out in the NESC strategy in 2009, which we have long advocated but which we could never impress strongly enough on the last Government.

The other thing I want to acknowledge is your comments about the role of Congress in Northern Ireland which normally we don't hear any recognition of but it is a most important role we believe ourselves and I think the events of recent months and weeks particularly show just how fragile the social eco system is in that part of the world and how important it is for everybody not to sit back and rest on the laurels but to keep continuously working for peace, progress and employment in Northern Ireland. And, if you can bring any influence to bear on Mr Cameron and his Government, I would ask you just to plead with him and to say, look this is not the time to be cutting back on the essentials of that society. The public sector in Northern Ireland is extremely important. You know it is not the normal balance lets say, but you can't rebalance any economy until, you can't cut down the public sector and expect things not to be the same as they were. You can only do it by bringing up the private sector eventually and not reducing anything in the absolute. I think this is crucial and I think it is so dangerous that this course of action is being pursued by the British Government.

Taoiseach, it's not the first time that I have had the honour of sharing a platform with you although you probably don't remember the first occasion, but I can tell you that it was a hotel in Galway around 10 years ago when we were both speaking in the Nice Referendum Campaign. Actually when we finished speaking you said to me, and I remember it very clearly, I actually agree with what you said that night and that is not really so surprising because I think the institutions of tripartism and welfare which are the essence of the European ideal are grounded very much in the values of Christian Democracy and Social Democracy. These are the forces that built up the European project in the first place and I think the tragedy actually is the secular liberals of Europe are now tearing that project apart. Now three or four weeks ago, I had the opportunity of speaking at a conference which Olli Rhen organised in Brussels and Wolfgang Schauble was one of the principal speakers at that conference, and he made the coldest speech that I have ever heard. He made essentially two points which I felt were very controversial. First of all he said that he believed that Europe didn't have a problem, he said some countries on the peripheral of Europe had a problem. That I think is essentially wrong, absolutely wrong. And, the second point he made was that solidarity in that context meant confining the problem to those peripheral countries. There is something basically wrong with that thinking which is against the European ideal because the fact of the matter is that the policies which were pursued in relation to the achievement of the single market, which was the deregulation of the financial system of Europe, created the conditions in which some of the lesser judgements were made in relation to our own economy and the flow of money into an asset bubble here. The decisions that were made here were wrong but so also was the construct of Europe which actually allowed that to happen and which actually now is hugely exposed. I mean the banks of Germany and Britain and France are exposed to the tune of \$1 trillion to the peripheral countries of Europe according to an essay in the most recent addition of *Foreign Affairs*. And the extraordinary thing is that despite all the talk of reform for the citizens in the different countries of Europe, the reform of the financial system in Europe hasn't really happened at all. There has been no reform of the Hedge Funds; there has been no reform for instance of the difference between investment banking and retail banking, what used to be the Glass-Steagal Act is still in place. The rating agencies are still pronouncing on countries and on banks just as if they had no role in the project. So, the point that occurs to a lot of citizens, Taoiseach I think is, is that reform is for the little people at the end of the day. It is not for the powerful in Europe.

And, Taoiseach, that is why we feel so strongly about the Joint Labour Committee issue. Because it is the little people who are affected there. Now I know that you have to deal with the Troika in terms of how this is run, but I tell you one thing about the Troika, Jack, I and Patricia have met them on a few occasions; the Troika want to make Ireland in to an economic laboratory. Something they can do to test out their labour market policies without causing any difficulties for the rest of Europe. That is something which happened before in New Zealand in the 1990s and we know how that ended. The fact of the matter is that the drive behind this particular thing seems to be pure ideology. There is no economic or fiscal reason or fiscal end served by making these changes to the incomes of people. And, I think really that at the end of the day policy making should be evidence based. The evidence in this case is all completely against them. The extraordinary thing I find is that people say that anecdotally this or anecdotally that, but actually if you go out and you commission a few people to do a very extensive report and if they come out with the wrong answer from the perspective of some people, admittedly, but nevertheless they come out with it and say that reducing the wages of these people will not create one more job, it seems to us incomprehensible that any Government would wish to pursue that matter any further in this, because at the end of the day, look, just listen to the employers. Mostly what they are doing is completely opportunistic. First of all the contract cleaning industry doesn't want it, the security industry doesn't want it, as far as the retailers are concerned I heard the head of PC World and Currys on *Morning Ireland* a week or 10 days ago and he said that the JLCs are the wrong focus. It is the upward only rent reviews which will cost the jobs. So, look, I think what is happening there is just opportunistic behaviour and it really shouldn't be entertained at the end of the day and I would plead with you not to go down that road.

There is continuity in so many of these things Taoiseach if you think about it. The Minister for Finance was making the point just recently that people needed to spend and that would help the domestic demand in the economy. The reason that people don't spend in my opinion is because of the loss of personal economic security. That is the case with those low income people and many other people in society. It is a case now that there is almost no such thing as a safe job. I mean for most of us, our generation growing up the idea of a safe job was the civil service or banking. That has completely changed as we know. So many people have heavy private debts and yet they are faced with the ECB deciding that they want to raise interest rates because they are a little bit worried because of the possibility of inflation in Germany, in circumstances where there is no wage inflation actually anywhere in Europe this minute. It is this ideology of the liberals driving a particular agenda which has these consequences and it leaves people no security about whether they will get into an retirement home at then end of their working lives, no security about their pensions, no security even that they might be able to put their kids through the university - the aspiration of every one of our generation that we would do a little better with our kids than we did of the previous generation. We couldn't do that.

Taoiseach, to be a bit lighter about it for a second, about a year ago there you were having a little local difficulty that you were dealing with and which you dealt with very effectively, but I remember one of the newspapers at the time saying well this is a conflict between the crowd from the boarding school and the crowd from the tech, and I think they had you amongst the crowd from the tech, and to tell the truth Taoiseach, most of us actually went to the tech as well, so we have the same perspective. And, I tell you the

boarding school crowd don't understand a lot of this so we are depending on you to actually put them right on it.

Just on the public service question Taoiseach. I think you were assured by the Public Services Committee and by ourselves when we met you that we are fully committed to the Croke Park Agreement and that we will try to make it work as well as possible. I would make a couple of points to you though about public service delivery generally speaking. Ireland, if you were to listen to a lot of the debate about it, you would think that Ireland had an enormously big public sector. In fact I think about 14 per cent of the workforce are employed in the public sector. In the most successful country in the world which Jack and I visited recently, we told you about which is Finland, 27 per cent of the people work in the public sector. In the United Kingdom, 21 per cent of the people work in the public sector. This is a relatively small public sector and the idea of outsourcing work to the private sector is something which I think needs to be approached with a considerable degree of caution as we have seen recently with respect to the Nursing Homes, both in this jurisdiction and indeed in the United Kingdom as well.

You mention also in the course of your remarks the question of higher level pay and so on. That I think is a valid point as far as it goes, but can I just say this to you, and you made the point also, you made the comment that we are all in this together. If we really wanted an egalitarian base to our economy there is one way to handle high pay and that is through the tax system. The one group of people who are never discussed are the captains of industry, and I tell you the wages is the smallest part of the reward that those people get. They get their annual bonus which is equivalent to their wages, they get their pension which is huge, and they have long term incentive plans which are quite normal. And, overnight we could have fairness in this country for everybody at whatever wage level with a progressive tax system. I think that is the way to do it and I would commend it strongly to you.

Could I also mention to you Taoiseach about the labour market and the comments you made and I noted them very carefully. Can I just say this to you about this concept that you are trying to do and I know you do it in good faith and I believe you and I think you are very honourable and honest in what you want to do in getting a sense of common effort. But, when you talk about the labour market for us there is one single thing which we find very difficult to cope with as a matter of principle, and that is that we certainly are not all in this together. We are not even all equal because this country's laws don't recognise officially our right to exist. They don't recognise the right to collective bargaining. And again Taoiseach I want to recognise that this is in the Programme for Government and I hope that you will be able to progress it as reasonably quickly as you can.

I think the remarks about the general social relations between us, the social dialogue as it were, I find that very welcome and practical in the current set of circumstances. There are a whole variety of reasons why the social partnership agreement collapsed when it did which is too tedious for us to go into now. And, I certainly welcome the open, transparent and accessible relationship that you have promised us this evening. I did make the point on radio this morning though, and I believe it to be the case although I think it is some distance away from us now, that the successful small countries of Europe in Northern Europe have all achieved their success by having a type of social consultation which is

embedded if you like in the concept of the negotiated economy. Most particularly in countries like Denmark. I think Ireland does have to look to its future as to what kind of country it will be and I think it is impossible actually to achieve our long term objectives without a sort of institutional framework in which that real effective dialogue can take place on the basis that every is as you say yourself treated with equal esteem.

Taoiseach, can I just say a few words in conclusion about the economy and I know we are singing on a somewhat different hymen sheet here but you will tolerate it if I make a few points to you as to we see things and how we have consistently seen them for the last three years or so.

We don't believe frankly that austerity is working. We just don't think that it can work. The figures if you look at them over the last three years – domestic demand has collapsed by 25 per cent. In the last week we have seen figures for retail sales, which when you strip out the motor industry and the scrappage scheme is coming to an end now anyway, are down in May this year on May last year by 5.1 per cent, and Gross National Product is down by 4.3 per cent. We are continually heading down and I think the difficulty is that the concept of an export led recovery is not going to work because it will be swamped by the difficulties in the domestic side of the market and actually when you think about it, if we are to in any sense get to grips with the problems we have, we need growth in the economy, we need growth actually to do some of the heavy lifting of the economy but we can't get growth going unless we have some stimulus into the domestic economy and continuously deflationary policies is not going to achieve that. There is no way that taking another 3.6 billion in the next budget is going to do other than drive us further down that direction. And, the crazy thing is that the markets don't believe us because if you look at the spreads on the bond yields last week – last Tuesday I looked at them – they are over 12 per cent. They don't believe that this is going to work at the end of the day. We have to get Europe to cut us some slack on all of this. We are facing a social catastrophe where long term and youth unemployment is going to constitute, I think, a lost generation and I think really what we have to start believing is that the economy is embedded in society not the other way around. By loading austerity upon austerity is only going to drive deeper down. We have always said, and it has not changed for us now, that the only way we can do the two elements of this – the first element is the fiscal imbalances that we have at the moment and the need to close the gap between income and expenditure in the fiscal side – we can only do that through a longer creative time. It is just not possible to it within the timescale that is being spoken about without killing growth completely. And, on the debt sustainability from the sovereign and banking debt side of things, ultimately it is an unspeakable burden for us and ultimately Europe has to recognise that it is a European problem as well and deal with it through the system of Eurobonds that the Germans and so on won't actually deal with them. That is the only long term solution to it and I would encourage and support you and want you to know that in your efforts to cut a better deal in Europe, you have the full support of this Congress.

Just lastly I would say to you Taoiseach, reflecting on your first 100 days in Government, I am sure if someone was asking you what your high points of achievement were, I am sure you would say probably it had to do with President Obama or Queen Elizabeth or whatever, but I say this Congress has a slightly different view. We think the clip in the ear you gave Shane Ross was actually the best highlight of your first 100 days.

Jack O'Connor, SIPTU & President of Congress

Thank you David and to those delegates who may be somewhat concerned about the amount time is elapsing so rapidly I want to just reassure you because David has bought a lot of time because in the light of his contribution just now and his earlier contribution, we can take the President's Address tomorrow as read I think!

Taoiseach, we are very glad that you decided to accept our invitation to address us here at the opening of our conference this evening. I have to confess that there was some concern as to whether or not you would accept the invitation and on the part of some of us maybe a bit more concern about what you might say when you did. And indeed I just want to say that I do regret understating your achievements earlier by failing to distinguish between miles and kilometres. It struck me Taoiseach when you were referring to the character of the people from the part of the country you represent – that my own mother was from your county and she bore the scares of the consequences of forced immigration and we were very acutely aware of what it meant as the letters came to and fro from her brothers and sisters across the world whom we never got to see. And it is a tragedy that as result of the implosion of the economic model which was embraced by those who governed our country for so long that we are now once again experiencing forced immigration on the part of our young men and women. And I think, Taoiseach, whereas there are differences between us and it would be hypocritical not to deny that we don't share necessarily the same view on all matters, the challenge that you are faced with and it is an unenviable one, is the challenge as you say of affecting the recovery. But, the key to that is the challenge of uniting our country because for far too long too many people spent too much time dividing our country along the lines of public service workers versus private sector workers and workers of category or another versus the other. The emphasis should be on uniting our country and I think Taoiseach, unless I am very wrong, that that is what you are focussed on. And if that is what you are endeavouring to do it will require affording working people parity of esteem in this country, because for far too long working people didn't count. And, if that is what you are endeavouring to address I want to assure you Taoiseach that we are up for that.

I want to thank you Taoiseach for accepting the invitation to address us. I want to thank you for your address and I want to wish you well in the enormous responsibilities that you have to discharge on behalf of us all on this island over the next number of years. And, I look forward, I hope, to a constructive relationship with your Government. Thank you Taoiseach.

Jack O'Connor, SIPTU & President of Congress

...(part of tape missing)...the Congress Centres and Labour Relations Systems, Chapter 6 on Youth Connect, Union Connect and Fair Hotels, Chapter 7 Congress Education & Training, Chapter 8 Campaigns and Communications, Chapter 9 Report on BDC 2009 and Appendix 1 Accounts, Appendix 2 The Executive Council, the General Purposes Committee, the Northern Ireland Committee, Appendix 3 Affiliated Membership, Appendix 4 The Congress Secretariat, Appendix 5 Members of Congress Committees & External Bodies and Appendix 6 Action on Motions to BDC 2009, and I want to call on the Treasurer Joe O'Flynn to introduce the financial statement, Joe.

Joe O'Flynn, SIPTU & Treasurer of Congress

President, delegates, just during the break there a number of colleagues and delegates congratulated me on being re-elected Treasurer very sincerely, but at the end of this presentation it might be more commiserations.

Colleagues, I am very conscious of the time, I am going to try and deal with this presentation fairly quickly but obviously, finances of any organisation are the resource that make things happen and I think all of us are acutely aware of just how difficult things are presently.

In relation to the financial situation, when I reported last in 2009, obviously things were looking an awful lot better for us as a Congress because back in 2007 we had introduced a new affiliation fee structure and effectively what drove that was the belief that we could no longer be very heavily reliant on either State funding or sponsorship of the various programmes and projects that we are involved in. And, so we set ourselves the task of becoming self-sufficient over a period of time. Unfortunately, timing wasn't kind to us and as you know while there were a number of aspects to the new structure put in place, one was being self-reliant, two was putting a campaign and organising fund in place, the third was putting a reserve in place for Congress to meet the 'rainy day' eventualities and we also took a very conscious decision that we should re-affiliate to the International Trade Union Confederation because we are a global movement and we have to be at the heart of global organisations if we are to have any influence and input into what is happening globally in terms of our membership. And so two years on, unfortunately, we are in a very different place.

Firstly, just to talk to you a little bit about the membership figures. As you will see from the slide, in 2009 we had almost 850,000 members affiliated to Congress. Unfortunately, this year 2011, that was dropped to below the 800,000 mark and that is a fall of just over 46,000 members or about 5.5 per cent. And while clearly the economic recession has impacted most profoundly on those members who have lost their jobs and indeed their families trying to sustain themselves and so forth, it obviously has had an impact in terms of Congress' finances as well because of the reduced affiliation.

In relation to other measurers, Chair, there has been external funding sources cut by the last Administration and the Shop Stewards training that most of us would have been familiar with, the funds to unions were cut without warning and indeed programmes that we had undertaken in anticipation of being funded from the fund unfortunately didn't materialise and was cut and we weren't paid for actual training programmes that had been delivered.

Secondly, we had project funds either reduced or axed, some of them really important projects to Congress and indeed to the membership we serve.

And, thirdly, within Congress itself a whole range of professional skills, the education & training upskilling, unfortunately that fund was cut as well when the Administration decided to refocus from people at work to people unemployed.

In relation to the core funding which has been provided for the last 35 years – since 1975 in fact – there have been three consecutive reductions in relation to the employment

training advisory services fund and that obviously has had a very significant impact on Congress. In addition there is a 2010 allocation which still has to be resolved and that has been referred to in the accounts document which has been presented to you. And, we are still at this point in time awaiting a funding contract from DEL, the Department of Education & Learning in Northern Ireland. Even in that we expect that there will be a reduction of somewhere between 14-16 per cent in that particular funding. Now, I suppose we would hope albeit I wouldn't hold out too much prospect that with the change in Government recently we may have some change of attitude and at least certain members of this Government may see the value of trade union education and upskilling, particularly Shop Steward training, Health & Safety training might become more of a focus for some members of this Government, hopefully it will.

In relation to internal/external aspects, obviously in previous years because of the role that Congress plays in society, we actually used to use this Biennial Conference as a source of income. Unfortunately, now, it is obviously a financial liability because we no longer have the kind of income we used to be able to secure from exhibitions, from advertising, from sponsorship and so forth and this year there will be a net cost to us of about 40,000 running the Conference whereas last time out there was a net benefit to us of 100,000, so you can see there is a big turn around in that whole event alone.

The other thing that I want to refer to is the Board fees. Naturally with the decline in Social Partnership and the appointment of trade union representatives to various bodies, there will be a decline in Board fees and I just want to put on record again, I think I did it in 2009, but I want to take this opportunity to again to refer to the fact that unlike many political appointments to various State boards and what have you, the trade union movement is different in that the people that we have appointed through Congress remit the fees that they get back to Congress because their primary task on being on any of these State boards is to influence the work and the policy in favour of working people and their families and so the likes of David and Sally Anne and Peter and others who are on State boards actually remit the fees back to Congress and they don't personally benefit from it unlike others like I said, and I am glad to take the opportunity just to again reiterate that point.

Colleagues, obviously the No. 2 Account – we have a number of accounts in Congress – but the No. 2 Account, the activities of this account is the worst affected by virtue of the rapid decline in the education training advisory service income. We don't think that is likely to be replaced any day soon if at all. And the other thing is that clearly it is not easy to reduced costs in that particular portfolio activity because mainly it is salary related and as a union organisation we have to be conscious of the requirements and needs of our staff just the same as any employer would be expected to carry out their care in a responsible fashion.

I now just want to touch on the consolidated picture. You have in your book the detailed accounts going back to 2008. The position in relation to the consolidated, all of the accounts combined, was that in 2008 we had an overall income of about €6.6 million and we would have spent about €6.2 million which gave us a small surplus. In 2009 unfortunately the position went into reverse in that we had an income of about €5.8 million and we spent about €5.9 million, giving us a deficit of just short of €100,000. Last year, 2010, unfortunately the income had declined very substantially over the two year period

to about €4.5 million – over €2 million of a reduction – and in that size of an income that is a very, very traumatic affect on any organisation. We ended up in a position where we spent about €5 million and we had about €480,000 in deficit. Now, that was a position that was clearly unsustainable. We did start to address in particular with David and Sally Anne and Peter – the management side of Congress started to address the issues with the staff in Congress itself. There were a number of voluntary redundancies and there were also very detailed exercises in relation to every cost that Congress incurs, so that we were looking not just at payroll but obviously we looked at non-payroll costs in the first instance to try and address the deficit situation. But as you can see from that slide, unfortunately, we are in a position where you cannot continue, we cannot simply continue to spend well in excess of what we are bringing in. And the reason I think is obvious. This year we are projecting a deficit in excess of €5 million, notwithstanding the good work that has been done already in terms of payroll and non-payroll. We haven't had any increase in affiliation fees since 2009 and I think to be fair even though I can't prejudge what is going to happen in two years time, I don't see us going to the affiliates for any increase any day soon because many of the affiliates themselves are struggling financially. Many of them have had huge drops in members and therefore their capacity to dig Congress out of the financial problem that we are in, simply in my opinion, won't materialise.

That brings us then to obviously the priority in relation to the incoming Executive Council and indeed the GPC itself. We did ask for this year having regard to the fact that we are trying to address the financial difficulties on a voluntary capacity with the staff of Congress, we asked unions to affiliate for the same level of membership financially this year – 2011 – as they did for last year. A number of unions actually did that and I want to put on record our appreciation for that consideration which was very positive and has given us that little bit of space in terms of dealing with the issue. As I said, all costs have been reviewed and savings have been made. And in fairness to the Congress management they have also renegotiated with many of the affiliated bodies, the ITUC, the ETUC etc for reductions in relations to the fees that we pay and that work is ongoing in terms of diminishing the effects that will have on the core services and indeed the staff of Congress itself. We have decided to obviously halt the reserve allocation because we simply cannot put €200,000 aside into a reserve fund if you are running deficits and that position is halted for the time being.

In relation to the Congress Pension Scheme, you will note from the report that over a number of years we got into a difficulty. I suppose like 90 odd per cent of defined benefit schemes in the country, the Congress scheme was impacted by reductions in investment income and so forth, to be the point where we were running a deficit of about €4.5 million. Now a very extensive negotiation took place again with the staff, with the Trustees of the Pension Scheme and indeed with the Pensions Board itself. A Section 50 was applied for and secured. That clearly was very, very important not just from a financial perspective but I would suggest to each and every one of us in the hall, that there is a political imperative in Congress shoring up the defined benefit scheme because you imagine if we had to close the Congress defined benefit scheme it would have been a licence for every employer in the country to follow suit in terms of definite benefit schemes that apply within the private sector. It was an important piece of negotiation that was completed and I would hope that you would agree with me in that. Presently where we are at is that we are in the throes of finalising negotiations with the staff in Congress in

relation to addressing the deficit position because as you would have seen from an earlier slide while this year is bad, unfortunately, the picture for next year looks even bleaker so we just have to obviously grapple the problem on now and deal with it.

So, just before I conclude Chair, resolving the long term financial stability of Congress will be an absolute priority for the incoming Executive and indeed for the GPC and Officers of Congress, but, I do want to say that there is probably a number of ways of addressing it. We are looking at new project funding, we are looking at negotiations with the staff but I would suggest to each and every one of us here that the best way of dealing with the financial difficulties is by reengaging in a very, very focussed way in organising the tens and thousands of workers who need our help at the moment who are not in any union and who need to be organised. And, I think that if anything I would have to say here this evening should be taken note of, it is the fact that there are tens of thousands workers who are not in a union and are waiting to be organised and that should be a primary task of all of use in the period ahead Chair.

The last thing I want to just refer to is the accounts themselves. I said to you at the beginning they are detailed in pages 120 of your booklet to 125, and there is a lot of detail in there and I hope you will take the time to read it. I want to take the opportunity Chair to thank my fellow Officers of Congress and indeed the Executive for their support over the past two years. It has been quiet a difficult period. I want to very specifically thank the General Secretary, David and indeed Sally Anne, who has worked extensively with me in relation to the financial affairs of Congress, and her help has been invaluable and a lot of the work that is being done is driven by Sally Anne and I want to put that on record, Sally Anne, you have been tremendous in terms of your application to try and resolve this problem and well done to you in that regard.

I also just want to finish Chair by saying that I won't have the opportunity of thanking you as President but I do want to say to you on behalf of your colleagues in SIPTU, that we are enormously proud of the job that you have done over the past two years. It has been the most difficult and trying of circumstances and you unfortunately inherited the position of President of Congress at the worst possible time, your timing was shocking.

Jack O'Connor, SIPTU and Congress President

You can say that again.....we are an hour behind schedule!

Joe O'Flynn, SIPTU and Congress Treasurer

....but I do want to say, Chair, that you have our utmost admiration not only for your commitment but for your vision. Throughout all of this difficulty you still have a tremendous vision for the role that the trade union movement in Ireland has to play in protecting and defending the interests of workers and their families and I want to thank you very sincerely for all the support you have given us.

Jack O'Connor, SIPTU and Congress President

Thanks Joe. Now the Financial Statement has been moved. Is there a seconder for the Financial Statement? Peter.

Peter McLoone, IMPACT

Peter McLoone from the IMPACT trade union and an outgoing member of the Executive Council and the GPC. In seconding the Financial Report, I just want to I suppose acknowledge the human dimension of the challenges that Congress has faced over the last two years. And, I think that it is appropriate that Congress would acknowledge that this has been an extremely difficult and traumatic period for the staff who work for Congress both in Dublin and in Belfast, and I think it would be appropriate that we would record our appreciation for what they have gone through and for the fact that at no time over the last two years has any member of the staff of Congress let the ball drop in respect of the work that they do for us, and I think that it is important just to put that on record. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, SIPTU and Congress President

Thank you Peter. Now the Financial Statement is before the floor. Are there speakers? Any speakers offering? No speakers offering, so I want now to put the Financial Statement to Conference. All those in favour of the adoption of the Financial Statement please show those against, abstentions. I declare the Financial Statement carried which is a further tribute to the work of the Treasurer.

And now I want to proceed to call on the mover of the first motion which is Motion No. 1 dealing with communication with Trades Councils and I want to call on the mover from Castlebar & District Trades Council to move Motion No. 1. And can the seconder for the motion come to the front please so that we can utilise the time. And can I also invite the mover of Motion No. 2 in the name of Fermanagh Trades Council to come to the front here and the seconder so that we can see if we can get these motions before the floor before Standing Orders closes us down. Thank you delegate. I am sorry; I should have alerted you earlier. Motion No. 1.

Cathy Blake, Castlebar & District Trades Council

Cathy Blake, Castlebar & District Trades Council moving Motion No. 1. Just to say briefly that communications between Trades Councils and unions is very important and we don't always have the time or responses to provide that so I just urge you all to support this. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, SIPTU and Congress President

Thank you. Is there a seconder for Motion No. 1? Eric.

Eric Fleming, Dublin Council of Trade Unions

I would just like to say that the relationship between unions and Trades Councils is very, very casual. I know it differs but it is quite amazing when you actually communicate with some of the Trades Councils to see how few unions actually participate. I have raised this at the Congress Executive several times and I don't think there is any hostility between Trades Councils, they just think that a lot of the leaders are busy with other things, but actually it is quite a shame that you get so many, many unions that are organised in cities and towns that have absolutely no relationship whatsoever with their Councils. And, when the Councils actually are called upon to do work everybody, even the ones not affiliated – kind of remind you of non union members demanding a service, you see them appearing expecting Trades Councils to do things for them and frankly it really is not good enough. I visited the Castlebar Trades Council before Christmas and was amazed to see how serious

they were and assured me that they had more unions than other Trades Councils so I would suggest that if we want to have another limb to this Congress and that if trade unions need to collectively organise in cities and towns, they need to get unions that are affiliated, at least those affiliated to the Congress, to make sure that they affiliate locally. And, I think that would be one great, great way of giving the Trades Councils a lift and having a service for all unions to use in times that they need it. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, SIPTU and Congress President

Thank you Eric. Now are there speakers?

Paddy Mackell, Belfast & District Trades Council

President, Conference, guests, delegates, comrades, Paddy Mackell on behalf of Belfast & District Trades Council to speak in support of this motion and the reason I was moved to speak is because of the way Trades Councils should operate and can operate particularly in the economic times we find ourselves in. It is important that Trades Councils are used. For example, in the North what we have is a situation where the Trades Councils meet on a regular basis – we meet once every couple of months – we will change the position on the Northern Executive so that each Trades Council will get the opportunity to participate at that level and we also think that it would be a very good idea for the Executive in the South to also have a rotational role for the Trades Councils, that each Trades Council across Ireland can participate at that level as well. So, we would support this motion, we would ask you to consider that particular when you go to a vote later on in the week, we are talking about the election of a Trades Council delegate for the Executive – there are four people standing. We are having a meeting later on after this Congress to talk about how we deal with that position but I know certainly with my own experience in the North that the Trades Councils play a vital role in a number of campaigns not least the water campaign. We were successful in stopping that water charges coming into effect in the North. We have attempted to have an All Ireland Trades Council body which we have met with I have to say, regrettably, some resistance, we are organising and continuing that and we would like to see some movement in that as well. Trades Councils are the lifeblood of this movement beyond the work we do in our own trade unions and I think we should support that and keep that in mind when you are voting during the week. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, SIPTU and Congress President

Thank you delegate. Are there any further speakers on Motion No. 1? I am going to put Motion No. 1 to the floor then. All those in favour please show, all those against, abstentions – I declare Motion No. 1 carried.

Now I want to apologise to Fermanagh Trades Council who I invited to the front but given that I am in the hands of Standing Orders which provides in Standing Orders No. 2 that at 7.20pm we would invite Lorraine Mulligan to address Conference on behalf of the Youth Committee, I am in the hands of Standing Orders so I have to invite Lorraine.

Lorraine Mulligan, SIPTU and Congress Youth Committee

Hello comrades, I wish I had a bit of extra time to work on my speech too but I will plough on anyway. I am here representing the ICTU Youth Committee to highlight the crisis that is facing young people in Ireland today. The rate of unemployment in Ireland among young people is among the highest in Europe. In fact, it is up at 28 per cent compared to a

European average of 20 per cent in 2010. So it is really serious and in fact one of the big problems is that it is becoming a long term problem. Long term unemployment among 15-24 year olds reached numbers of 25,000 at the moment and males have been, young men in particular, have been particularly affected in the construction industry and others. This all, I suppose, underlines the need for the trade union movement to take action to try and advocate to address the problem of youth unemployment. And, unfortunately, I am here to report that our trade union movement is not active enough in this regard. We are not active enough in organising young people, getting them to participate in structures within our unions and setting up those structures in fact. And, it is crucial for the union movement to take this seriously. It is very positive that here today we have representatives from the Secondary School Students Union promoting a new initiative called 'Youth Connect', which aims to give young people more of an understanding of what trade unions do. We need to support that, we have a hundred schools on board already but the union movement needs to get very serious about connecting with young people because we are the life blood of the future of this movement, and unfortunately we are not recruiting in the numbers that we need to. The need now is to target recruitment campaigns on young people.

Finally, I think it is important to say a word on the JLCs and the minimum wage and to underline the importance of that issue for young people. Many young people face precarious employment in one form or the other – short term contracts, temporary, casual work and they would be detrimentally affected by any diminution of protection under the JLC system and certainly with regard to the minimum wage as well. So, young people are behind the same kind of values that the trade union movement is promoting generally and we need to use young people as more of a resource so that our trade union movement becomes only stronger. Thank you delegates.

Jack O'Connor, SIPTU and Congress President

Thank you Lorraine. Patricia McKeown.

Patricia McKeown, UNISON

President, delegates, we have just passed a written motion to the Chair of Standing Orders proposing the suspension of Standing Orders for ten minutes to allow the Fermanagh Trades Council motion to be debated. We haven't got an answer yet.

Jack O'Connor, SIPTU and Congress President

I call on the Chair of Standing Orders. He doesn't have it. The clock is ticking Michael. How long will it take you to deliberate on this with the Standing Orders Committee Michael?

Michael Sharpe, Chair of Standing Orders

Chair, it is essentially a matter for the Conference because there is a provision in Standing Orders Committee Report that you have already accepted that Standing Orders can be suspended, so the motion has been put forward by UNISON quiet properly that Standing Orders be suspended to allow for an extra ten minutes, which I gather will be enough, to take this motion. So, it is a matter simply for the Conference.

Jack O'Connor, SIPTU and Congress President

Are you proposing this Chair?

Michael Sharpe, Chair of Standing Orders

Well, I am quite happy, all the provisions have been complied with but it is a matter for you and the Conference.

Jack O'Connor, SIPTU and Congress President

Ok, thank you Michael. Accordingly, I am going to put it to Conference that we suspend Standing Orders to allow the Fermanagh Trades Council motion, Motion No. 2 to be moved and seconded. Is that agreed? Is there any opposition to it? Ok, that's agreed.

John Martin, Fermanagh Trades Council

Well, Conference, I was only going to take a few minutes but I have to say a few words about Patricia and thanks very much Patricia, you are a sterling worker and thank you Jack.

John Martin, Fermanagh Trades Council to move Motion 2. Chair of Conference, today's retired members have had a lifetime of experience within the trade union movement and have still much to offer. You do not cease to be a trade unionist when you walk out through the office door or through the back gate for the last time. However, not all unions fully utilise what their retired colleagues have to offer and often leave them feeling that they have been dumped on the scrapheap. There is a wide disparity in how they are treated within individual unions. This motion therefore calls on Congress to carry out an exercise which will identify best practice and introduce some uniformity in the treatment for what has the potential to be one of the movement's greatest assets. Please support the motion, I move.

Jack O'Connor, SIPTU and Congress President

Thank you delegate. Secunder?

Victor Murphy, UNISON

President, Conference, Victor Murphy, UNISON seconding this motion on behalf of Fermanagh Trades Council and bearing in mind we are an hour overspent.

Conference, as far as this motion is concerned, in relation to the exercise of affiliating for, I would also propose that we bring it down south. Recently in Northern Ireland, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions Retired Members' Committee have started this process, and it is giving some really great information for us. If this motion is passed, Conference, it would take that down to our colleagues here in the south. And, most experiences and exercises would be that we would discover that those trade unions that don't have Retired Members' Committees, we could ask why not and we could encourage them to actually set up Retired Members' Committees. For those trade unions that do have Retired Members' Committees, and that don't have delegates affiliated to the both committees, North and South, we would encourage them to do so as well.

And, finally, Conference we would also ask that the exercise and the information that we get, as John said about best practice which would lead to a formulation of what, how and when retired members can give their voice, can improve on what they do, for the great trade union movement, both north and south and indeed we can actually move forward on that. I would ask Conference to support the motion.

Jack O'Connor, SIPTU and Congress President

Thank you delegates. Are there any speakers offering on Motion No. 2? No speakers offering. I am going to put Motion No. 2 to the floor. All those in favour please show, all those against, abstentions – I declare Motion No. 2 carried, and I complement the Fermanagh Trades Council for their perseverance.

Delegates, we have now exhausted Standing Orders in more ways than one and can I just urge you please to assemble before half past nine in the morning. We have a great deal of business to get through and we are already behind time, so I hope you have a good evening, but I hope you are all here at twenty five past nine in the morning so that we can get our business under way. Thank you delegates.

Tuesday 5 July 2011 Morning Session

Jack O'Connor, SIPTU and Congress President

Delegates, good morning, I declare today's session of Conference open and I want to invite the Chair of Standing Orders, Michael Sharp to address Conference, Michael.

Michael Sharpe, Chairperson of Standing Orders Committee

Good morning delegates, Michael Sharp, Chair of Standing Orders giving Standing Orders Report No. 3 which is a verbal report.

You will have noticed that a number of things fell off the agenda at the end of yesterday's session. There was a couple of motions and some chapters of the report. What we are proposing to do is – this afternoon's session on The Commission of Trade Unions is scheduled from 2pm until 4.30pm. We would estimate that it may not last that long and therefore, what will happen is, during that session at the start of it having Sally Anne Kinahan making a presentation on the Commission, but some of her presentation also relates to the chapters in the report that fell off yesterday. So, she will make that presentation. When we are finished all the business in relation to the Trade Union Commission we will then move back to take those chapters in the report and the motions that were missed out yesterday. Now that may mean having to go back into private session so it may mean leaving the hall and coming back, we will advise on that at the time. Those of you who were preparing Motions 3 and 4 be prepared for those sometime between 2pm and 4.30pm this afternoon if there is time.

In relation to today's agenda, we will be starting now with the Presidential Address and as Jack indicated yesterday, since his thunder was apparently stolen by the contributions yesterday, he may not take up all the time that is allotted on your agenda. So, just to note that once Jack is finished and that element is finished we will be moving straight into the scheduled motions and the chapters in the report, so the movers of Motions 5, 6, 7 and so on – just be ready that that may happen before twenty to eleven, ok. I think that is all we have in relation to Standing Orders Report No. 3, thank you.

Jack O'Connor, SIPTU and Congress President

Thank you Michael. Is that course agreed? Thank you delegates.

Eugene McGlone, UNITE & Congress Vice President

Congress it calls on me to ask the President to give his Presidential Address which, we have been told, is going to be extremely brief – he has only got twenty-five pages with him – so prepare himself. The President of Congress, Jack O'Connor.

Michael Sharpe, Chairperson of Standing Orders Committee

Sorry, just one other item of Standing Orders that I forgot to remind people of is that credential cards will be exchanged this morning after 11am, not the ballot papers, you will just get your voting cards which you can change for ballot papers. That process will start at 11am. Liam Berney and Fergus Whelan will be moving around the hall so if

delegates could be in their seats from 11 O'Clock on – you can engage with Fergus or Liam any time after 11 but it won't start before 11.

Eugene McGlone, UNITE & Congress Vice President

After a hic-up the President.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Jack O'Connor, SIPTU and Congress President

Vice Presidents, I do hope that period of time is not deducted from my time. In any event, Vice Presidents, delegates, comrades and friends, this our conference is taking place during a defining moment in human history. Despite its dramatic collapse in 2008, Liberalism appears to have reasserted itself with a swing to the political right across the western world.

And, many may ask as to how an economic model, driven by the imperatives of unbridled greed, the collapse of which wrought such havoc on the lives of so many, win increased support in democratic societies. The answer, of course, delegates if you think about it is simple – it is because it coincides exactly with the interests of the wealthiest people in the world. The message has long since putrefied but the piper still calls the tune.

But things are not as they seem. The lava thrown up by the volcanic eruption of 2008 is still cascading across the landscape, reshaping the environment in which we live but in a way that is not yet possible to predict. The system is still teetering on its pedestal and history is far from over. The question as to whether the future will be more brutal or benign remains to be decided.

It is noteworthy that the global swing to the right has not manifested itself in Latin America. It has not done so because the devastating consequences of unbridled Neo –Liberalism and its associated “Shock Therapy” are still fresh in the collective memory of the people of these countries. But what is more noteworthy still is that most of the countries in the region, with the exception of Colombia, are each in their own way pursuing better fairer ways and more importantly, proving that they can work.

Things are otherwise in Europe, for the moment at least. Overall the economy is on a growth trajectory. However, this is overshadowed by the threatened default of one or all of the stressed countries as well as Italy, which carry a combined liability of E3,350 billion, which would sink the Global Financial System beyond trace.

A Marshall Aid-type strategy is required to rescue Europe both economically and politically. However those in charge have opted for the shock therapy of a reparations course instead, ignoring the lessons of history.

They are applying a supply side remedy to a demand side crisis aggravating the problem rather than alleviating it. They have reduced the once great institutions of the European project to mere debt collection agencies for the major banks, obstructing recovery and inflicting misery on the citizens of Europe.

They are exploiting the opportunity presented by the crisis to restructure the social landscape, dismantling the last vestiges of the welfare state. Meanwhile they are setting about imposing an internal deflationary dynamic through the Merkel - Sarkozy inspired Euro -Plus Competitiveness pact, effectively institutionalising austerity. This entails a direct full-frontal assault on collective bargaining, pay and pensions. The undeclared objective is to rid European Capital of the obligations of the Post -War settlement. Regressive policies prevail everywhere as the entire apparatus of population management, governments, civil administrative tools, the mass media and academia have been mobilised to facilitate restoring bank balance sheets and "saving" the financial system. It mirrors the agenda that is playing out in Wisconsin and other states in the US and more brutally in Colombia and indeed in Palestine, (which I believe is victim to the greatest single injustice in the modern world).

Yet we are not in the mess that we are in because of the absence of a "competitiveness" pact - we are in it because of the absence of proper financial regulation. However, consistent with the interests of those at the top of the banking system - that issue has not been addressed at all.

All this is alienating working people across the continent. The wrong people are running the institutions and they are pursuing a route that will result in the collapse of the entire European project. Increasingly it appears to be only a free market business club, in which all the key decisions are taken by unelected bankers and the social dimension is only a decorative coating to sugar the poison pill. If that is actually the case, the logic of history deems it should collapse and collapse it will!

It is unlikely the future of the world will be decided in a place as small or peripheral as Ireland. However, due to the gross mismanagement of the economy of the Republic by the last government, even by the standards of their own capitalist creed, for more than a decade, we find ourselves centre stage in the unfolding drama. This is the context for our deliberations here this week because it is equally significant for working people in both jurisdictions.

The Tory/Lib Dem government in the UK shares the outlook of their contemporaries who are running things in Europe. Margaret Thatcher, then leader of the Tory Party once declared "there is no such thing as society" and then went on to spend the best part of two decades trying her best to make it so. Her successors are now back to finish the job, skilfully camouflaging the project under the guise of the ironically deceptive "Big Society".

They are committed to cutting spending by £80 billion over 4 years. This translates into £4 billion in Ulster. It would entail the loss of 25,000 public sector jobs and a further 15,000 in the private sector or one in eight jobs in the province.

Here in this jurisdiction the last government embarked on the largest austerity programme ever attempted in a developed country over a similar time frame. It resulted, as David Begg predicated it inevitably would, in failure!

Throughout we challenged the strategy insisting that it could not work and that it risked condemning the country to a prolonged deflationary spiral. We articulated an alternative course producing a 10 point plan prioritising jobs, investment and growth. We envisaged

it being delivered through a solidarity pact which would serve as the catalyst for the supreme national effort which emergence from the mess demands. Our efforts were dismissed, even ridiculed, as the outlook which caused the crisis in the first instance prevailed and the Government of the day opted for the course which ultimately led to the loss of national economic sovereignty. The proof of the pudding is in the eating, as they say.

Along with the workers of Greece and Portugal we now find ourselves in the straightjacket of the ECB/EU/IMF diktat. It is a place which is bad for everyone on the island of Ireland and bad for the peoples of Europe as well. It is a recipe for more of the same failed remedy – a growth obstructing cul-de-sac. It reflects the interests of the major European Banks, the shareholders to the detriment of the stakeholders, the citizens of Ireland and of Europe.

Of course, the genesis of our problems is not sourced in Europe. We have to look closer to home for that. Indeed we have to come to terms with weaknesses that are more profound than inadequate regulation or greedy bankers or incompetent politicians. We have to address the core value system that underpinned the evolution of the catastrophe which incentivised speculation while starving innovation.

It long preceded the Celtic Tiger and is embedded in a system that has prevailed in Ireland since the wealthy landed, business and professional elites subverted the march to democracy on both parts of this island after the First World War. They created parallel economic and social models that promoted their narrow sectional interests but failed the people of both jurisdictions. This has resulted in the Republic becoming one of the most unequal societies in the developed world.

It is now in the throes of a serious economic crisis for the third time in 60 years with all its contingent unemployment, emigration and misery. One would imagine even its proponents would accept that the time had come to discard the old model and the repugnant value system which underpins it. But no, the outlook which caused the crisis still informs all attempts at resolution.

For example: The planned dismantlement of the mechanisms which protect the pay of the lowest paid 20% of the workforce did not originate with the recession. It is driven by the same sentiment that drove the race to the bottom during the frothy bubble days, – incidentally aggravating the process of overheating the economy. If job creation was really the objective, the issue of upward only rent reviews would have been dealt with long ago, (even if it required a constitutional amendment); the practice of raising prices to coincide with major public events would have been prohibited and those who fail to pass on last week's generous reduction in VAT rates to consumers would have been told in no uncertain terms that the original rates will be reinstated unless they do so.

No, this is about withdrawing the threshold of decency to facilitate devaluation through internal deflation. It is about more of the same – working people carrying the can while others can carry on as they please.

There is no moral justification for the proposition that we should have to pay the recklessly accumulated debts of those at the top of the banking system. More pertinently there is no possibility of 1.8m people repaying €200 billion within any reasonable timeframe.

We have to extricate ourselves from the straightjacket of the “Troika” agreement which is suffocating any prospect of growth in domestic demand and without which there will be no appreciable recovery. The question is how to trigger re-negotiation? Opinion is divided as to the potential consequences of threatening default and we have not, thus far, supported the call. We may well come to do so and we are conscious that resources are being run down as time passes. However, we cannot anticipate the response of the ECB which could withdraw support from our covered banks. Neither can we assume the way it would play with the global companies, including those in the financial services sector, upon which so many of our people depend for their livelihoods. We can be pretty certain it would mean balanced budgets overnight – which would be devastating for working people and all who depend on public services.

I respect the view of those on the left who hope a better fairer paradigm would result from the ensuing chaos. Indeed, I dearly wish it would be so, but history, especially the history of Europe, speaks otherwise.

The problem does not lend itself to resolution in a narrow national context. It can only be solved within a European Framework which would involve burden sharing and some kind of limited transfer union and a restructured democratically accountable ECB. The European Trade Union Movement could play a critically important role in helping to bring this about. If we and our allies in the social democratic parties and the left generally fail to do so we will sink with the wreckage of the status quo. The mantle will then pass to xenophobic nationalism and the stage will be set for the re-enactment of the conditions which followed the last systemic collapse in Europe.

Meanwhile at home, I believe, it is tactically and strategically wrong to argue that we do not have options within the, admittedly restrictive, Troika agreement. To adopt that position leaves the field for the architects of the political right to redesign the future.

Ultimately the real issue is how to achieve a resumption of job generating growth. Even within the shackles of the Troika Agreement there are steps that can and should be taken to construct the all island economy that would secure the future of all the people. This entails simultaneously addressing the bloated savings ratio, the investment deficit and the inequitable distribution of the burden of adjustment.

The savings ratio in this Republic has increased from 2.7% to almost 12% while domestic demand has collapsed. This is partially driven by people’s fears of the loss of their homes, their pensions and their jobs. The Minister for Finance’s call to spend will ring hollow as long as people are paralysed by fear.

Labour secured a two year moratorium in home repossessions in the programme for government. It is good enough as far as it goes. But, people must receive a firm and absolute guarantee that their homes will never be repossessed as long as they are making a genuine effort to service their mortgages. This is eminently possible in a state owned

banking system and the markets have already priced for it. Congress has proposed a comprehensive set of measures to address concerns about solvency of pension schemes over the past decade and these must be acted upon to remove doubt and instil confidence. The current policy of the Pensions Board is having the opposite effect.

Parallel with this the investment deficit must be addressed. Gross fixed capital investment in the economy has fallen from more than €46 billion in 2007 to less than €19 billion this year. There is still €4 to €5 billion in the NPRF. It must be utilised to drive a job generating investment programme. There is €78bn in pension fund assets. Today I am calling on the Minister for Finance to engage with fund trustees to try to develop a scheme to secure 5% of their assets, i.e. €4bn for investment in infrastructure and venture capital in the domestic economy on the basis of exemptions from the recently introduced levy. This would more than offset the deflationary effect of the €3.6bn cut scheduled for budget 2012 and create upwards of 80,000 jobs providing an enormous boost to confidence.

At the same time the thorny issue of the failure of those with real wealth to contribute in proportion to their capacity to do so must be grasped. We can no longer afford the luxury of subsidising the rich and being one of the most unequal countries in the world.

A national pact for recovery in this jurisdiction centred on this new departure and focussed on the redirection of resources into sectors that can sustainably grow could serve as the catalyst for the mobilisation of the entire island in the way that is critical to overcome the awesome problems confronting us all.

It would mean abandoning the shallow quick buck value system that has served the few to the detriment of the many and replacing it with the principles of social solidarity which were key to the success of the great economies of central and northern Europe. These countries did not see equality as some kind of optional extra that could be addressed after the shareholders had been appeased. They saw education, skills development, investment in research and state industry accompanied by social cohesion through public provision as the intrinsic components of their strategy. The result was the creation of innovation societies which regularly top the global productivity leagues delivering the highest levels of progress recorded in all of human history.

It is not yet clear whether the new government will embark on such a course. They may instead settle for the roadmap to the Stone Age laid down by their predecessors. Ultimately this means allowing public policy to be dictated by the narrow-minded sectoral self – interest which has plagued the development of Ireland since the 1920s. The parties which respectively share the legacy of Connolly and of Collins should aspire to more and the people who elected them have a right to expect them to aspire to more.

One way or the other we must concentrate on organising to bring about a better, fairer way, point out the inconvenient truths, and insist on parity of esteem for working people. It entails a multiplicity of actions, campaigning, educating, organising and yes, it means making agreements as well. This is a marathon not a sprint and every crusade entails tactical retrenchment in face of impediments, erecting fortifications, holding ground and preparing for a better day because tilting at windmills only results in defeat and disaster.

In 1918 the people who preceded us in the ITUC and Labour Party, as we were then known, had to stand aside. Consequently working people were relegated to spectator status, while the other side were designing both jurisdictions in accordance with the image of their interests.

We are living through the most challenging period since the emergence of fascism in the 1920s. Yet, despite all the despondency it also offers the greatest prospect of shifting the balance in favour of working people and civil society in more than two generations. The old model doesn't work. There must be no return to the past. We must provide the vehicle for working people to influence the architecture of a new economic and social model for the future. No one else will do it. The great economies of northern and central Europe were not built by the Trade Unions – but they could not have been built without them. No other economic actor would insist on the intrinsic requirement for the social component and none would have the potential to develop the leverage to balance the power of the shareholders with those of workers, citizens and stakeholders.

We can only achieve this if we radically and rapidly transform our movement. We must:

- Outline a clear vision for a successful equality driven all-island economy underpinned by a comprehensive Bill of Rights which affords working people full parity of esteem
- Resource the expertise, technical and academic skills to defend the proposition against all comers and create the communications capacity to challenge the hegemony of the other side in the dissemination of ideas
- Create a new organising culture shifting resources to challenge those who deny workers their collective bargaining rights and who are setting the pace in the race to the bottom in employment standards
- Fight for investment, education, training and productivity to ensure the success of businesses that recognise their employees' right to organise because this is critical to winning the battle for a decent workplace environment
- Come up with solutions in the public service that put the public first in order to keep public services public
- Fashion a restructured well-co-ordinated, effective movement to drive a progressive workers agenda in every sector of economic activity on this island
- Strengthen our participation in the European trade union movement and ground our activity in support of workers in countries such as Palestine and Columbia in the context of solidarity around the parallel issues that confront working people at home.

Once again we have arrived at a 'V' in the road on this island. We can chose to remain as we are limiting our aspirations to negotiating modifications on the agenda of the other side. That course would amount to a betrayal of the heroic legacy of those who founded our movement. More importantly, it would be a betrayal of the interests of working people today and indeed of those not yet born.

We must assert their right to a say in the future – a future that works for all on this island in a Europe that works for all of its citizens.

Thank you delegates.

Eugene McGlone, UNITE & Congress Vice President

Thank you President, brief as ever! Those of us who have had you for two years on the Executive know how brief you can be and we are thankful that David used most of the material yesterday, we have gained a bit of time. Despite the fact that Jack doesn't particularly want to have the next event occur, he is going to have his vote of thanks anyhow, and I call on John Douglas from MANDATE to propose the vote of thanks to Jack O'Connor, and Patricia you are seconding this motion. Come on John – we are under time constraints.

John Douglas, MANDATE

Apologies delegates. I was totally unaware. This is the first I heard that I was proposing a vote of thanks. It is an honour to do it anyway.

I got to know Jack O'Connor over the last two years as President of Congress, at the most difficult time in the history of the trade union movement and the economy. He has been a beacon and he is also steadfast in his social beliefs, and he has come in for a hell of a lot of personal criticism and unfair personal attack in the last two years. Nonetheless, he has made himself available on TV and newspapers, for conferences, and he has always championed the movement and the cause of the working class. And for that Jack I want to thank you on behalf of all the members of the trade union movement. I know we are facing into a difficult three or four years but I have to say that the trade union movement has stronger for your leadership. You have set down very strong ground rules and very strong principles and I am sure that the people who will take over – Eugene, Patricia and the rest of the leadership will follow those principles. This trade union movement is far from dead. This trade union movement is going forward. It is growing and Jack you have laid the root for us. Thanks very much.

Eugene McGlone, UNITE & Congress Vice President

Thank you John. Patricia.

Patricia McKeown, UNISON

President, Conference, Jack, they are springing this on you because we know you didn't want a vote of thanks but you are getting one anyway. We are starting by doing by what I think the Taoiseach told us not to do yesterday – he told us to behave ourselves and not let ourselves down. We are going to let ourselves down in a big way, by saying first of all that I heard him say that he was glad that you were leaving yesterday but we are not glad. You took over at the absolutely worst possible time as the President of this Congress. A task, I think, that any President that went before you would have been entirely daunted by. But, you rose to the occasion. John has already talked about the obscene personal attacks on our President of our Congress. This good, decent, committed man, how dare they attack Jack. But, the people who taught me my trade as a trade unionists always said if they are attacking you, and particularly if they are attacking you viciously, it is because what you are saying and what you are doing matters. And, I think

that everything that Jack has said and done during his presidency has mattered. I have been so delighted at his inclusive approach to this Congress to all unions on this island and to all workers on this island. I particularly want to thank you Jack on behalf of trade unionists in the North because you have made it a particular ambition of yours to be with us on a regular basis and to put our issues centre stage on the agenda and to recognise that this is one whole trade union movement. It may be unique in Europe in that it covers more than one jurisdiction, but you have been a president who has been prepared to roll the sleeves up and do business in both and to go to war on behalf of your people. You have also been a president who has understood and highlighted the fact that the most vulnerable people on this island are those to whom you will also give a voice to as leader of our movement. Not only the lowest paid and most vulnerable workers on this island but all of those who haven't even got the chance to have a job and to have a vision of a better way of life. You have been a champion of the excluded and the impoverished and the discriminated against and you have taken every opportunity as a President to put those people rightly at the centre.

You are the kind of President who has laid the foundation for turning our movement into a real force for social change. It has been difficult for you to do that because we are an unruly bunch. You have made us confront many things during this presidency not least the need for us to do business with each other in a more collective and much more powerful way, I thank you for that. You don't like thanks, I know that, but you deserve it. You have also flown the flag for the Irish trade union movement in other countries. You have made us proud, I have been very proud to hear trade unionists from other congresses and other jurisdictions commend the way in which you have put across the case on behalf of the people of this island and the workers on this island in particular. For all of that Jack, whether you like it or not, it is one giant thanks and a big message of solidarity.

Jack O'Connor, SIPTU and Congress President

Well, thank you John and Patricia and thank you delegates. I did have the aspiration on assuming this office that I might do something useful and it is actually taken me to just before I step down to achieve that aspiration. By cutting my speech short I have managed to save twenty minutes for you delegates, so at least you can't say I didn't do something useful.

So, we proceed now with the debate on 'A Fair Economy'. I want to refer you to EC Report Section 1 Chapter 1 - The Role of the EU, Chapter 2 - The Bankers Bring Down the Stat, Chapter 3 - Economic Policy Stifles Growth and Chapter 4 – Creating Jobs and Growth, and I want to call on my colleague, Patricia King, Vice President to move Motion 5 on behalf of the Executive Council.

Patricia King, SIPTU and Vice President

Thank you President. Delegates, austerity is not working. From the onset of this crisis, Congress pointed out that more time was needed to get public spending and tax revenue into alignment. We argued that taking 20.5 billion out of the economy over three brutal and successive budgets would strangle growth. This is precisely what has turned out. The domestic economy continues to decline. In the first three months of this year alone there was a fall of 2 per cent in household and business spending. A drop in spending of this scale has not been seen since the dramatic collapse of our economy in early 2009. The cost of Irish borrowing were we to borrow on the international money markets has

escalated to an all-time high of 12.1 per cent last week. The EU and the ECB are not blameless and cannot be absolved from responsibility for the crisis in which we find ourselves. They cannot dictate the terms which shape our daily lives while simultaneously adopting a 'look no hands' stance as they survey the economic wreckage which bears their fingerprints. Be in no doubt delegates, their primary objective is to protect the European banking system. French and German banks are exposed to the tune of 900 billion euro to the peripheral countries. These delegates are the bond holders that can't be burnt. They are insisting on the full cost of the crisis being loaded on the debited countries while the creditor countries do not shoulder any of the burden. The Irish people have to insist indeed fight for some economic and social justice. We cannot carry the burden of debt and austerity which has been imposed upon us, our children and our grandchildren to come, without serious damage to the quality of our lives and yet another generation lost to unemployment and emigration.

But as our General Secretary said last night, this crisis is a manifestation of a systematic flaw in the Eurozone. It is a flaw that can be fixed but it requires a European solution. The most effective and sustainable way to fix it would be to Europeanise the debt using Eurobonds and this is an approach that both Congress and the ETUC have consistently advocated. And, it has been received with enthusiasm among our union colleagues across Europe. This reception was in stark contrast to the lack of solidarity displayed by the mainly centre-right governments in Europe to their EU neighbours in distress. Their concern has to be to ensure that the burden of debt repayment falls on those who can least afford it and without any consideration whatsoever for the long term damage to social cohesion in the most deeply indebted states. In my view the hardship and humiliation being heaped on the people of Greece by one austerity package after another is wrong. It is contrary to everything the European project was supposed to be about and companies like Goldman Sachs which advised the previous Conservative government in Greece when their books were being cooked are now valued advisors in the corridors of power and that smacks of hypocrisy to me.

And speaking of hypocrisy, in recent times we have had Minister Bruton majoring on a set of proposals aimed at cutting the pay of the lowest paid workers in this country. He spuriously claims that cutting the wages of the lowest paid will generate tens of thousands of new jobs and he even recently had the temerity to mention Margaret Thatcher's success in this respect after she demolished the Wage Councils in Britain in the 1980s. In fact what she achieved was to intensify the race to the bottom and force hundreds of thousands of low paid workers into social welfare, roll back decades of social improvement for millions of working people and their families across Britain. She achieved something else which is resonant of our current situation in Ireland – she widened the gap between those at the top and those at the bottom of the income scale gifting the wealth with a treasure trove of glittering incentives, vastly enhanced salaries, bonus schemes, pension packages, share options and a range of benefits and pension payments shrouded in secrecy. This friends is replicated in this country. Just two years ago, the top 10 per cent of households in the Republic of Ireland had 11 times the disposable income of the lowest 10 per cent.

Delegates, reform is a word we hear a lot about. Reform of the JLCs, reform of the REAs, reform of the social welfare system, reform of the public sector but we don't hear as much about corporate governance reform, reform that allows board remuneration committees

open even wider gaps between executives and shop floor workers. That word reform has now become debased and has lost all meaning. If our friends in IBEC are genuinely interested in real change let them put their money where their mouth is – let them committee to an open and transparent system where their payments are no longer a secret. If we really want to spread the burden fairly across all elements of society we could do it simply enough and you heard that last night. We could create a progressive tax system with higher rates of income tax for those at the higher end of the earning threshold. The system needs to be geared so that the tope 20 per cent pay for the crisis and not the bottom 20 per cent as at present.

Delegates, in the midst of all this doom and gloom let us identify the real opportunity that presents itself here. After of decades of wrong doing we have an opportunity to create social justice. We have an opportunity to put people first. We have an opportunity to build this movement nationally and internationally, not be coalescing with the other side, but by ensuring that those with whom wealth and power resides have no choice but to listen and adopt the principles of basic fairness as the foundation for any solutions being developed for our future. Thank you very much delegates.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thanks Patricia can I call John Douglas to second for the Executive.

John Douglas, MANDATE

On behalf of the rest of the Executive Council I'd like to formally second the motion and open it up to the floor.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you John. Motion number five is now before the floor. I want to call on SIPTU then to move motion number six and NIPSA to be ready to move motion number seven and Belfast and District Trades Council to be ready to move motion number eight. Gerry.

Gerry McCormack, SIPTU

President, fellow delegates, Gerry McCormack, SIPTU, moving motion number six, Growth, Jobs and Hope.

Delegates, the austerity programme which is part of the EU/IMF facility to Ireland is undermining any chance of growth and long term recovery of this country. It makes no sense to persist with a policy which is obviously pushing this country towards a default in circumstances which could be different if private bank debt and national debt were separated. This policy appears to be designed to appease creditors and rating agencies with a view to this country returning to the financial markets at some stage in the future.

However delegates, international rating organisations are still continuing to downgrade Ireland. Consequently the simple fact is if they persist with this failed policy of re-paying the crippling debt in the manner proposed the consequences is a default with the uncertain outcomes for the stability both for this country and across the entire region. The one point all economists agree on is that to deal with public debt we need to generate sufficient level of income, surplus and this of course depends on growth in our economy. But as we all know there is little or no growth in our economy because the deflationary budgetary policy has collapsed the domestic demand in Ireland and has exacerbated the situation.

The EU and the IMF are determining the terms of our very economic and political existence and must be held responsible in part for the crisis in Ireland. They cannot wash their hands of their culpability by suggesting that they are saving our economy. As we all know that in the reality they are only worried about saving the Euro regardless of the negative impact on the Irish people. The orgy of near uncontrolled lending by Irish financial institutions into an already inflated Irish economy played no small part in the demise of the capitalist system and the destruction of our economy. The great EU plan for economic and monetary union was based on the idea of an optimal currency for Europe. Unfortunately only monetary policy dominated and the ECB operate an interest rate policy that was completely unsuitable for this country, but delegates, let us not forget the role played by the last crony capitalist Government of this country. The Fianna Fáil Green Government that pressed the self destruct button on that fateful night when they guaranteed the debt of every speculator, loan shark and their business friends both here and abroad. This austerity is not just a phenomenon in the Republic of Ireland but the Tory Liberal Government in the UK is proceeding to dismantle public services and attack workers pay and conditions of employment. This is having a devastating effect on our member's right across Northern Ireland where the destruction is caused by the children of patriotism Cameron and Clegg.

Delegates, I could speak of the destruction of our public services, the attacks on public service pensions, the attacks on private sector pay and the horrific loss of employment, the attempt to dismantle the national minimum wage and the proposed cut to lower paid workers in the private sector by eliminating terms and conditions of the JLC's or the REA's, unfair levies on private sector pensions, not to mention the spectre of crippling debt imposed on homeowners in this day resulting in the seizures of home by state owned banks, cuts in social welfare, the emigration of your young men and women but worst of all delegates, worst of all is the absolute collapse of any hope for redemption for ordinary working people in Ireland and their families by the failed economic policies being thrust upon them by the Troika, the capitalist angels of despair and doom. The trade union movement must continue to build alliances with other trade unions and political left at an international level to combat the neo-liberal thinking which is enveloping European at this time. We are seeing the unabated rise of the extreme right in countries and everything must be done by the trade union movement to prevent this from happening. President, delegates as our motion sets out what we need is hope, hope that this Government, the EU and the IMF, the so called Troika will listen to the people of Ireland listening to our fellow citizens in Portugal, Greece, Spain and most likely a few other EU states. Hope that they will not destroy our public services, our health and welfare systems, hope they will not place an unacceptable burden applying taxes on ordinary working people, hope for work for our young people and our unemployed, hope that we can see a better fairer way and implement policies that will facilitate job creation, hope that we can generate sustainable growth but most of all give hope to our country. We will be able to provide stability for working people. Working people by the way are paying the cost for the excesses and gambling of the rich and powerful throughout Europe and they are insisting that we the ordinary working people pay for their mistakes. Finally President, delegates Congress must continue to campaign vigorously to fulfil the hopes and aspirations of our members and for the citizens of Ireland North and South and we must ensure that we defend against the dismantling of employment protection infrastructure in both jurisdictions of this Ireland. Thank your very much.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Gerry. Loraine.

Lorraine Mulligan, SIPTU

Comrades, delegates I am seconding the motion on behalf of SIPTU. This motion points out the failure of the austerity recipe in Ireland. We have already heard that retail sales excluding motor trade are down 5.1% in May this year compared to last year and a monthly decrease of 6%. We have seen that wage cuts and tax increases have diminished the spending power of ordinary people and what has been the effect of austerity on our society. We all know the huge figures on unemployment, there are 446,000 people on the life register in June 2011. The rate of unemployment is 14.2% compared to 13.2% in June last year. This shows that the recipe that we have been using so far has not helped. What is also important to stress is the effect that this is having on local communities. Funding in the community sector is being cut back and these are projects that are vital to sustaining the social fabric of our society. These are the projects that we should be protecting rather than undermining. Furthermore householders struggling to pay their inflated mortgages on devalued housing and people are struggling with daily bills. So what is required? We need a jobs stimulus; we need investment in human capital and necessary infrastructural projects. Efforts by the Government to date are but a small step and inadequate and speaking with my youth hat on from yesterday the internship programme that we have seen needs not to be about job displacement and cheap labour but about providing real opportunities to young people. But this is just the tip of the iceberg for what we really need and we all know about the constraints imposed by the EU/IMF programme on budgetary spending. This underlines the need for a sustainable European solution which gives space to peripheral countries to grow their way to recovery. Ireland is a small open economy and we rely on international trade and therefore we rely on the solidarity of our European partners to bring about a solution. We need euro bonds to share the burden across Europe and the Social Partners should be consulted more on the new economic governance regime which as been instigated at European level. We need real representation at European level now giving the consolidation of power at that level. This motion also calls on the protection of employment standards. Already in 2009 5.5% of those in employment are at risk of poverty. We need ensure that vulnerable people are protected in this crisis.

Jack O'Connor, President

Delegates, Motion No 6 was moved by Gerry McCormack and seconded by Loraine Mulligan for SIPTU. Can I ask delegates on moving and speaking? Seconding, moving, whatever that you make clear your name for the purpose of the record please and while the delegate from NIPSA is approaching the rostrum there. I just want to announce that a fringe meeting on Palestine is being held at 1.00pm at the Mangerton Suite in the Glen Eagle here and it's limited to 100 places and tickets are available from the Congress desk on a first come first served basis. Now delegates, sorry.

Sinead McKenna, CPSU

I wanted to speak on Motion 5 but I just didn't get up on time.

Jack O'Connor, President

I will allow a debate to develop on all the motions once I get them moved and before the floor, delegate.

Sinead McKenna, CSU

So can I speak on Motion 5 or do I have to wait? I don't mind.

Jack O'Connor, President

Since you are there I will allow you to speak.

Sinead McKenna, CPSU

Ok. Sinead McKenna, CPSU. Members I was undecided whether to bother coming here today as I'm on my last week of maternity leave, my decision however was made easy when I heard the General Secretary on Morning Ireland yesterday saying that the country could rest easy in the knowledge that as head of ICTU he wasn't going anywhere and I thought to myself well IBEC might rest easy at that news, the Government might rest easy but I certainly wasn't resting easy with that news so I got on a train. Members this motion number 5 rededicates ICTU to a Better Fairer Way Campaign. I think they should call it what it is an even more placid quieter way. I got excited when I saw an ICTU document entitled 'A Call to Action' but after reading it I realised it is in short a call to circle the wagons. When really we should be coming out shooting at this stage. It is yet another report about what we should do, so the reason I'm here members is to call on the ICTU leadership to step down. Your silence over the past years has been deafening and like it or not the Trade Union movement are not only not recruiting members but members are leaving. We can't wait for more reports, we have to act now. I don't doubt the commitment of the leadership in dedicating their lives to the Trade Union movement but your inaction has been a strangle hold and a gagging order on the Irish worker. We got rid of Fianna Fail and the Catholic Church but tell me how do you rid of a Trade Union leadership who have become so embedded in Social Partnership structures that they have apparently forgotten their original purpose. I don't want to hear about the similarities between the Swedish and Japanese economic models, I want to hear anger and what I hear is an even more placid and quieter way. Surely the one positive about a recession is that it is the ideal recruitment ground for Trade Unions when workers are seeking protection. Members I fear that the Trade Union movement is slowly going to become extinct if it carries on in this passivist crappy boy manner. I urge you the leadership of ICTU to step aside while there is still enough time for the next generation to build on a Trade Union movement and I ask you them members to consider the fact that when you raise your hand for or against this motion are you happy that this is the only form of action that you will ever be allowed to make as an Irish worker under this ICTU leadership. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you delegate. I call on NIPSA to move Motion 7.

Blair Horan, CPSU

President, General Secretary, Blair Horan, General Secretary, CPSU. I just want to make it clear what Sinead said does not represent the position of the CPSU.

Jack O'Connor, President

I call on NIPSA to move Motion 7.

Brian Campfield, NIPSA

Ok are you ready, Ok Thanks. Conference, Brian Campfield to move Motion 7 on behalf of NIPSA. I just want to introduce a note of caution on the debate on public spending on the welfare state and the economy generally. Whether we like it or not we are all prone to the relentless propaganda in the media that the economies in the UK and the Republic of Ireland are in a mess and that there isn't enough money as a result of this financial crisis to pay for public services. We do need to be careful that we don't get sucked in to a position whereby we become apologists for those who are intent on rolling back the social and economic advances which have been secured mainly by organised labour and other progressive forces over the last fifty to sixty years. In the UK we hear of some people who will identify with the Labour Movement saying that the state of public finances is such that we need to cut back on public spending but not so far and not so fast. There is no doubt that we are facing tough times and that the state of finances are in a mess but there is no necessity or rational for the Trade Union movement to give comfort to those who are intent on diluting and in some cases destroying public services and driving down workers wages. We need to avoid falling into that trap of assisting these people to resolve these problems because if we don't we will potentially loose all credibility with the people that we represent. The truth is that we are not all in this together despite what An Taoiseach said yesterday. We need to ensure that there is clear blue water or whatever colour you want to have as water between our agenda and that of the Government's and Parties that are implementing these severe austerity measures on both political jurisdictions. Now of course there may be occasions when we have to adopt positions as a result of tactical or strategic considerations which we might find difficult and at the end of the day these involve judgement calls and we will have different opinions no doubt on many of these matters. But it is important Conference that we have motions in front of this conference which provide a clear alternative to the crisis that is facing us. This isn't a crisis caused by greedy bankers or lax financial regulations although those things have contributed to the severity of the crisis on some of its specific manifestations. But if we are still of the view that the existing social and economic system can be organised in the way which will remove the traditional burden that working people have to bear when the recession and depressions occur then we must be either naive or stupid. The demands of this trade union movement we should be promoting should go to the heart of the neo-liberal agenda and challenge the supremacy of capital and profit, the supremacy that that exercises over labour and ultimately the democratic rights of all citizens to be able to be organised and be able to run the economies for the common good. This motion I hope goes some way towards that because firstly it challenges the State to use its resources to develop high quality jobs. It raises a central issue of tax fairness and re-distribution, if not ownership. It criticises an overall alliance on foreign direct investment and it calls for an end to privatisation of public services, of public assets, and public service functions. Conference these are essentially disuse of democracy so they are. Who owns these countries or jurisdictions, is it Government or is it multi-national financial interests, the credit rating agencies, the IMF or the European Central Bank?

Of course the Republic of Ireland has a political establishment along with certain business and property and financial interests have created a situation by where the sovereignty and the democracy of the country have been compromised and undermined. In the UK the Government of millionaires who know where their interests reside and amidst the confusion

and uncertainty created by these same interests in the first place they have lost no time in rolling back what was basically the post Second World War consensus about what the state provides for the people. Conference we may be battered and we may be bruised and some of us are more battered and bruised than others but we have to have some faith in our ability and our capacity to make a difference.

If a trade union movement can't show a way to the wider community to the wider community than we are in difficulty because there is no other body in society, North or South, that can do this. We'll have a debate on the future of the trade union movement this afternoon but the central question must remain – how we can become more relevant to our members and the community at large and how we can build ourselves as the leading force in this community both North and South. I move the motion.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Brian, and the seconder. The seconder? Seconder for the NIPSA motion. Formally seconder? Formally second? (seconded formally) Thank you delegate. And now motion eight for the Belfast Trades Council. Have we a mover?

Paddy Mackell, Belfast and District Trade Union Council

Brothers and sisters, comrades, Paddy Mackell, Belfast and District Trade Union Council to move motion number eight.

Conference we are united in rejecting in what has become known as austerity measures which is just a fancy, almost apologetic term, for what actually is an attack on workers with terms and conditions and on public services imposed by those with wealth, influence and power against those who have neither. We are NOT all in this together save for the fact that every one of us in this room are being forced to pay for the capitalist correction so that business and global corporations aided by the IMF and world bank can return to unrelenting profit margins while you are put back in your box where you belong. Thankful that you have a job, if indeed you even have one. A wage even though less income than before, and a pension, if you're lucky, which you will pay more for, work longer for and get less back in return. These will be, there will be reduced public services, which as we heard yesterday from the Taoiseach, probation of those public services increasingly delivered by insatiable profiteers who will suck out every last penny or cent for themselves. Enda Kenny and his Party do not offer a way out of this mess for workers. They are part of the problem, part of the system which seeks to make you pay. As we witnessed recently when welcoming Obama in Dublin, he presented himself as nothing more than overexcited blubbing teenage cheerleader or slightly embarrassing for a tea rather than the leader of a sovereign State to be taken seriously on a global stage. In Britain with three quarters of the cabinet millionaires it is also clear that that Tory Government will increasingly only protect and promote its own.

The Irish Labour Party has demonstrated that obtaining and maintaining power are their only drivers for their policies. What a disgrace it was to hear Eamon Gilmore recently announce that further cuts to public services are likely. In the North we have what can only be described as a schizophrenic Shinners. While Sinn Fein make noises in the Republic, about a left alternative to the crisis in capitalism. In the Northern assembly they enthusiastically embrace the cuts agenda, forcing forty thousand more people onto the dole queues. Whatever the argument, whether they are actually administering British rule

in part of Ireland, there is no doubt whatsoever that they are, without any hint of embarrassment, unashamedly, implementing UK Government Tory cuts in jobs and public services that is neither in the Left agenda nor in the national interest.

In the UK the treasury loses £123 billion to tax evasion, tax avoidance and unpaid taxes each year. Under the Barnett Formula they're not sure of this, if collected, would be about 3% amounting to roughly three and a half billion. Almost equal to what has been cut from the assembly budget. Stolen by the rich in big business rather than going after these thieves the British Government have cuts tens of thousands of revenue and customs jobs. Welfare benefit cuts in the North will amount to one billion. Hitting the most vulnerable in society, those without a voice, women will be hit hardest losing most jobs in the public sector, be hardest hit by cuts in public services and suffer greatest impacts by cuts in welfare provision. Connolly was right when he said the worker is the slave of capitalist society, but the female worker is the slave of that slave.

Comrades, the trade union movement is the only movement that has the ability and the capacity to lead the struggle against the onslaught against workers and their families. We should now develop an effective alternative economic strategy with a campaign across Ireland, assisted by trades councils in every town and city. There is nothing and nobody else left who can lead the struggle. We need to learn a lesson from Portugal, Spain and Greece in particular. We should not be afraid to call protests and organise strikes. Withdrawing our labour will be our voice. A strong voice, loud and proud demonstrating that workers have had enough. Along with that mass movement of workers strength we also need to develop that coherent and intelligent alternative economic strategy so that not only do we see ourselves as providing a credible alternative but that our families, friends and the wider community look to the trade union movement as the real voice for a decent society which puts people first rather than profit, cares for the most vulnerable rather than blaming them and hunts down businesses, banks and their apologists and makes them pay their fairer way. It is time for that socialist republic, which 100 years ago James Connolly argued and died for would Connolly mentions in this quote, England in the following quote, you can add the U.S. and global corporations, he said – *'if you remove the English Army tomorrow and hoist the green flag above Dublin Castle, unless you set about the organisation of the socialist republic, your efforts will still be in vein. England would still rule you, she would rule you through our capitalists, through her landlords, through her financiers, through the whole army of commercial and individual institutions planted in this country'*.

Comrades, in every generation there comes a time when individuals have to make a stand. Conference, this is our time. It is time to get off our knees and to fight back. We owe it to ourselves and the next generation. Support the motion.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Paddy. Now is there a seconder? Seconder? Seconder? No seconder? (seconded formally) Ok formally seconded.

Now I just want to alert you to the fact that the credential card stubs are being collected in relation to the balloting and that is going on in the hall so it is important if delegates are in the hall who intend to participate in the elections and I want to call now on UNITE to move motion number nine, Jimmy.

Jimmy Kelly, UNITE The Union

Thanks Jack. Morning conference. Jimmy Kelly moving motion nine from UNITE.

Conference, everything that the trade union movement said has everything we had predicted has come true. When we say the trade union movement predicted it we mean in Northern Ireland and in the Republic of Ireland. And we said at the time when Brian Cowen on behalf of the Fianna Fáil Government was moving the austerity programme that the only other political leader agreeing with what he was saying was David Cameron. And now we see the proof of the Cameron Glegg attacks on communities in Northern Ireland. The unions in Northern Ireland under the banner of the Northern Ireland Committee of Congress are not sitting back looking at this. We've put in preparation our plans for balloting for industrial action and that will be happening very soon in order to resist the cuts that are being inflicted on the community. And as David said yesterday in his reply to the Taoiseach, those cuts will have a devastating effect on communities in Northern Ireland and we've got to stand up to him.

We said that if you cut wages and public spending, if you pile taxes onto workers demand would fall, unemployment would rise, tax revenue would crash and the deficit would worsen – exactly what has happened. We said that if you do nothing about unemployment you won't be able to do anything about public finances. We've said that if you try to bail out insolvent banks like Anglo Irish and Irish Nationwide that we would end up being bailed out ourselves.

Along with other Unions across the country we warned the Government that deflationary policies will lead to low growth, high unemployment and higher debts. Now being right delegates doesn't bring us much satisfaction. We're looking at unemployment levels which continue to increase and emigration increasing every month. Hundreds of thousands of workers that we represent in this hall are living on a poverty line wage while the Government is seeking to cut wages further. Household have to decide whether to pay their mortgage, pay their rent, pay the ESB bill or buy their children shoes. And we saw the special Primetime programme on carers admitted on front of camera that particular week that they decided not to buy food so that they could care for their children. We're collapsing public services and social supports to ensure that private banks can repay private creditors. It's time that we move beyond a critique of exactly what's happening. This is not about having the best analysis, it's not about earth shattering speeches, it's about taking action to deliver what we think is the way forward. We need a sustained and substantial investment programme, a multi annual multi billion initiative to modernise our economical social base and create thousands of jobs, an immediate end to austerity as other speakers have said and public spending cuts. There must be no further cuts to the overall level of current spending or public services or employment levels, social supports and protection. Substantial tax increases on higher income groups is vital as a means to repair public finances with the least amount of damage to economic growth and demand. We have to resist further pay cuts in the public and private sectors. Wage deflation is only prolonging the recession. That's just an inescapable fact. We must argue for a massive transfer of wealth and income from the elite households to workers households. Equality is a tool for growth and social justice and it's only going to get worse conference, it's only going to get absolutely worse. And unless we stand up, unless we fight back we're

going to be taken for granted and everything that we stand for will be whittled down and diluted.

Nobody believes that the current strategy is going to get us out of the mess that we are in. We don't believe it, the Marxists don't believe it, even the cabinet ministers don't believe it. If we continue on the path of austerity and bailing out bank debt we'll end up a semi-permanent ward of the EU and the IMF.

I'll just refer briefly to talk in recent days about a return to social partnership. That is not the way delegates, partnership weakened our trade union movement. It took away our members hopes, fears and concerns of our members for granted. It weakened the movement and we can't tolerate a return to that sort of social partnership. We might wish that if we were back in the days of social partnership everything would be grand, everything would be back to normal. It won't, because you will only be dealing with that worse situation. In taking away our independence we are suffering as a movement from the fact that they did take away that independence. The Taoiseach credited us last night as the largest civil society group in Ireland. Let's use that strength delegates to give us collectively a drive for an alternative approach to the only way that other ideologues would have us adhere to but which is doomed to failure. Instead lets develop and then aggressively pursue concrete political and industrial strategies. Documents and statements are not end in themselves they are a means to action and it's time for action now delegates. I move Motion number 9. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thanks Jimmy. Seconder for Motion number 9. Frank.

Frank Barry, UNITE

Frank Barry, UNITE seconding Motion number 9. I think it is about 20 years ago, maybe 25 years ago I heard the phrase the politics of fear. I didn't appreciate what it actually meant, didn't understand what it actually meant until where we are today. Because today people are living in fear, their fear of losing their job, the fear of losing their home, the fear of not getting a proper health service, the fear of stealth taxes and the list goes on. Fears of marriage breakups, of divorce, of couples not being able to cope and there is worse, we have suicides as well. It is like we can do absolutely nothing, it's like watching an invasion of tanks coming into your country or coming down your street and you not knowing where to go or what to do. The uncertainty of the whole process, when will we come out of this darkened hole that we are in at the moment? This motion tries to address the demands that we need to make for an alternative for what is being done in the name of austerity of bankers, of bond holders. These are greedy loan merchants, they are loan merchants. We shouldn't be cow towing to them and we need to stand up and face them down. We need to look and instil hope. We have got to tell people what we stand for, to believe in yourself, to believe that we have a right to oppose these things and to take whatever action is needed to demonstrate that there is an alternative politics to what we are facing today. I ask you to support this Motion.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Frank. Now delegates, Motion 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 are before the floor for debate. As is the relevant sections of the Executive Committees Principal Report, Section 1, Chapter 1, The Role of the EU, Chapter 2, The Big Bankers Bringing Down the State, Chapter 3, The Economic Policy Stifles Growth and Chapter 4, Creating Jobs and Growth. I am inviting speakers.

Antonette McMillen, NIPSA

Conference, Delegates, Antonette McMillen, NIPSA speaking on Motion number 8. Conference I'm not going to go over what Paddy has said because he has covered a lot of information in that but in particular what I want to look at is how incumbent it is on ICTU to educate and in particular young people and this I believe requires a joined up strategy North and South. Governments North and South are attacking benefits, wages, the minimum wage, legislation changes in relation to tribunals, unfair dismissals and all of these are attacks I see in particular on our young people. Therefore, we must and need to encourage a united strategy and we need to support these young people. Young people are emigrating for they feel that there is nothing here for them. They have no prospects and no one is listening to their needs. ICTU strategy I don't believe specifically deals and targets with young people. Each individual unions are looking at the youth and the ICTU youth and I know certainly my own union we have certainly a strategy and at all conferences we must have so many delegates here from the youth committee. I would say that we would need to do well in listening to Loraine yesterday I think she spoke very well when she said that the ICTU youth are not, that we are not active enough in organising young people and getting them involved and I think we would do well to remember when we talk of Collins and Connolly that they were the youth wing, they were not like me on the wrong side of death, it was the youth wing who were leading the people and people listened to them and we should start listening to our young people and involving them more. ICTU has it's own economic crisis that we heard yesterday and we need to realise as well that one of the only ways out of that is to involve young people within this movement. If we don't bring young people into the movement then there aren't going to be any ICTU or any unions. The young people are the way to go and ICTU, trade union is doomed without them. We need those people and if we don't lead them who's going to lead them? Because I don't see anywhere else out there leading them, and what will happen in every society, and as Jack said yesterday learn from the lessons of history. The young people will get up and do they will do it themselves and it will be a shame in this movement if we haven't been the ones to lead them. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you delegate.

Maria Morgan, NIPSA

President, conference, delegates, Maria Morgan to support motion number seven. Conference I want to support and echo the points in this motion that my own general secretary made, but I want to particularly highlight the rejection in the first paragraph that we're all in this together. And to demonstrate that point I want to quote from a leaflet that the Public and Commercial Services Union who were on strike on the streets of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland just last Thursday, and I was to applaud PCS and NUT, ATL and UCU for taking that action. They were on strike for ordinary citizens for the alternative because it is doable. But conference, their leaflet quotes: the price of this financial crisis is being born by people who absolutely did not cause it; I am

surprised that the degree of public anger has not been greater. And conference, the person who said that was Mervin King, the Governor of the Bank of England in March 2011. He says he's surprised that we are not more angry. So if he's of that view, let's give him what he wants, let's get more angry, let us state loud that we will not shoulder this pain, that ordinary workers and people and their families in our communities that we are in this together but we won't shoulder the blame for the banks and the financial sector. Let's do it together. And in the North in the autumn let us take the action to demonstrate that we will fight back. And just to let you know that in the North we are getting our branches prepared for coordinated industrial action so that in September and October on behalf of ordinary working people and their families we would show the likes of the Governor of the Bank of England that we are more angry than he knows. Let's show them that we in the trade union movement right across these islands with our families and our communities that we are in this together and we're going to fight back. Please support the motion.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you delegate. Patricia.

Patricia McKeown, UNISON

President, congress, Patricia McKeown, UNISON, speaking in support of the motions in this section and there are five motions taken collectively which reaffirm our alternative as the right way to go, have a further analysis and call on us to take further steps and the other thing these motions taken collectively do, is they make a call to action. And let us be very very clear about who the leadership of this movement is, we, the delegates, the affiliates, here in biennial congress in Killarney are the leadership of this movement on behalf of the other 800,000 and the many hundreds of thousands more who need to be encouraged into the ranks of this movement. So it is down to us, not for us to attack each other or people on platforms or not on platforms, it is down to us the trade union movement, the affiliates, the lay leadership and the membership to take this on and go on the offensive.

The motions are not totally explicit about the how because the how is up to the rest of us but I think that we could in no doubt whatsoever that what the congress has been talking about is a strategic campaign which includes political action, which includes industrial action, which should include direct action by the people of this country North and South and that means us exercising our responsibility to get into dialogue with ordinary people within our communities and encourage them to stand up. Or in some cases that we need to take from their example when they lead the way and hey stand up we need to be standing with them. It also requires international pressure, the exercise of our fundamental human rights and all of that in a way which demonstrates that our movement is the force for social change on this Island. Let us not forget that in large measure we, our families and our communities put into Government who is currently in Government north and south so therefore let us exercise that collective power on our politicians in a real way which involves the electorate at grass routes lever putting serious pressure on each and every one of them irrespective of what political party they come from they are there to serve us in both jurisdictions their programme is failing. We have a real alternative but we've got to do this collectively and I would like to think that the combined industrial action we are taking in the North could be mirrored across this island. I support all motions.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thanks Patricia. Are there any other speakers on the motions? Any other speakers? Does any delegate wish to speak on the relevant sections of the report?

Ok so I am going to put those motions to the vote. Delegates, all those in favour of motion number five please show. All those against. Abstentions. Motion five carried.

Now motion number six in the name of my own union SIPTU. All those in favour please show. All those against. Abstentions. I declare motion six carried.

Now motion number seven in the name of NIPSA. All those in favour please show. All those against. Abstentions. I declare motion number seven carried.

And motion number eight in the name of Belfast and District Trades Council. All those in favour please show. All those against. Abstentions. I declare motion number eight carried.

And motion number nine in the name of Unite. All those in favour please show. All those against. Abstentions. I declare motion number nine carried.

And now to the relevant sections of the report, section one, chapter one, chapter two, chapter three, chapter four, all those in favour of the adoption of those sections please show. All those against. Abstentions. I declare those sections of the report adopted.

And now I want to move to motion number 10 on crisis and the economy and I want to call on the NURMT to move. And can we have the mover of motion number 11 in the name of Dublin Trades Council and the mover of motion number 12 in the name of Waterford Council of Trades Unions ready to move please.

Declan Roche, RMT

Declan Roche, RMT. Morning president, conference.

Right across the western world Governments have decided working people will pay for a financial crisis they did not create. Governments have unleashed class war and what threatens to be the biggest ever attack on welfare and public services. The fabric of our society built up over decades is being destroyed before our very eyes. Irish workers are at the forefront of this struggle.

IMF, the EU, the European Central Bank demanded massive cuts with the economic bailout package was agreed. They don't care about decent public service or Irish people. They don't care about working class communities or the poor and vulnerable because they represent the wealthy. The last coalition Government introduced four of the harshest budgets in the history of the state extracting 20 billion Euros from the economy. The most recent budget cut costs of up to 60,000 jobs. Austerity does not work. After four austerity budgets unemployment is higher, the deficit is bigger and 1000 people a week are emigrating. Over 300,000 people are unemployed in Ireland today, an unemployment rate of 14.2%. This is a cruel cuts programme. How else can you describe a cut to the minimum wage, many have seen the pension they have worked for and paid into their

whole lives either disappear or benefits sharply reduced. The proposal to increase the qualification age for the public pension is another attack on workers. Cutting incomes in a recession just makes matters worse. 70% of the Irish economy revolves around an economic crash caused by capitalism and unregulated greed of banks sent the world into recession. The cuts are a political choice and not an economic necessity.

The Government, IMF, EU and the European Central Bank are deliberately not telling the truth. They have used the scale of the debt to frighten people into accepting the need for deep cuts. The cuts are unfair and hit the poorest and most vulnerable hardest, whilst the real culprits, the bankers, are not penalised. Cuts destroy and damage public service for everybody. Cuts destroy sector jobs too. Cuts don't work. Daily press demand the plunging economy further into recession.

A sensible alternative. There is an alternative to punishing working class communities for a financial crisis that was not of their making. A fair, just and long term approach to reducing the deficit based around tax justice including higher taxes for the rich, public investment and job creation.

Thank you congress I urge you to pass, to support this motion. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you delegate. And is there a seconder for motion number 10? Formally seconded? Thank you delegate. Now, motion number 11 Sam.

Sam Nolan, Dublin Council of Trade Unions

Sam Nolan, Dublin Council of Trade Unions, moving motion number 11 on Government policies. And I must specify the remarks by saying it's Government policies in the Republic in case the people from the North of Ireland think otherwise.

It was an experience once again to listen to a Taoiseach in the space of a couple of years putting a positive spin on Government policy. But (**Fiona finished Louisa starts**) this it has changed, our new Government has embraced the basis policies of the previous Fianna Fail dream world. There accepting number one. That the IMF, EU, ECB deal which means that the rich and the powerful in Ireland and in Europe will be repaid the principal and the interest on their toxic loans. It means number two that at least the next two budgets will be a mixture of the hair shirt and the thumbs screw. But they say they represent all the people. Their representation can be very selective. We say to them that we do not represent all the people, we do not represent the financiers, the bankers, the manufactured employers who are raping this country and we do not support the politicians who represent them. But we do represent the 700,000 plus trade unionist on this island. We do represent the workers of yesterday who are the unemployed of today and the emigrants of tomorrow. Keys can be symbolic, I remember my 21st birthday which was a long time ago, I got a key. We need to fashion different types of keys to open the sources of investment and to create real jobs. Like Greece we can not repay our banking and sovereign debts within the terms of the IMF agreements. Serious restructuring of the debt must take place by the Government and that Government of ours must begin to play hard ball in Europe. The surest way to pressurise them is to fight and resist every austerity measure that is announced or will be announced in the next two budgets. The banks, are

they not nationalised now. Are they not working in our interests, it's strange that the main activity is to act as a financial conduit for the repayment of the toxic debts to the financiers of the world. Another question why should the banks who are now nationalised be handed back to private ownership when those banks become profitable again. Tomorrow we will be discussing our Commission Report on Congress in one section it states Congress straddles political, social, religious and community differences in a way that no other social organisation does. Congress should provide an umbrella for these organisations in the aforementioned groups who accept the broad trust of our policies and organise them to act in unison with us. When any decision is taken by Government or employers the question of the minute must be what will Congress do and how will Congress act. When that happens we will be a decisive power in this land. I move.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Sam and is their a seconder for Motion number 11. Secunder, formally seconded. Thank you Eric. Now Motion number 12 in the name of Waterford Council of Trade Unions, have we a mover for Motion number 12, Tom.

Tom Hogan, Waterford Council of Trade Unions

Tom Hogan, Waterford Council of Trade Unions moving Motion number 12. It is accepted now by economists both national and international that Ireland will face insurmountable debt by 2014 without the inability to repay it. The markets seem to be confirming this by the fact that Irish bonds are the highest in Europe behind Greece. A prospect of growing our way out of this crisis is not taken seriously by serious commentators on the basis of the policies that are being pursued that are deflating the economy. Since the private debt of bankers and speculators has been socialised class interest has been redefined as the national interest and since the election in February the hardship that is the IMF/EU agreement is presented not as hardship by the parties that now form the Government like they said prior to the election but as a responsibility and I thought we heard some of that in Taoiseach Kenny's remarks yesterday. Total burden sharing and burning the bond holders and labours way or Frankfurt's way was all talk and nothing more. Within three weeks of taking office Michael Noonan announced in the Dáil for the benefit of the Irish people and market participants that they were honouring the IMF/EU agreement. Working families have suffered massively with this with mass emigration, loss of jobs, reductions in wages, dwindling social welfare and dwindling social services and of course all the attendant depression and problems that comes with that. Add to that a further nine billion that has to be taken out of the economy over the next couple of years and we can see the further misery that's coming down the track on the heads of working people.

The agreement that's already been mentioned also envisages a sell-out of state assets in order to pay for the debt. The question of the two pillar banks AIB and Bank of Ireland can they clean up their balance sheets and trade their way back to sustainable profits thereby not incurring debt on the state is very much open to question. However the bailout of Anglo Irish and Irish Nationwide has already been absorbed into state debt and there is no chance of this being returned to the state where just about we are only beginning to pay back the reckless loans of Anglo Irish and Irish Nationwide. We will be borrowing 40 million over the next 14 years, three million a year, between now and 2025. That's more than is used on the primary school education and national school budget each year. Over the next 25% of Government borrowing will be used to pay down the debt of Anglo Irish bank and what have ya.

The cuts in health, education, social welfare and in investment are subsidising past repayments of Anglo debt and the future costs of winding down that Michael Noonan has called a warehouse. A warehouse that's been investigated by the Gardaí. We all want a functioning banking system that will lend credit to for productive investment that will protect the jobs and conditions and wages of the workers working in the banks and that will protect the savings of ordinary people. And the way to do that we believe is to take the banks, the remaining banks into genuine public ownership where there are democratically accounted to the state and to the workers who work within them. In fact the workers within them should be in a controlling position within them. We are being asked to bear an unbearable sacrifice and the Government has no mandate to transfer billions of taxpayers Euro's to save foreign banks that the Irish people had nothing to do with in borrowing money from.

I think the trade union movement itself has to outline to its own membership and to working people in general where we're going to be in the next three years with the full implementation of this agreement the effect on our standard lives and why we don't want to go there. The attainment of the Fairer Better Way of investment of jobs, protection of wages, social services and welfare can only be achieved by vigorous campaigning and resistance. The Taoiseach stood here yesterday and told us that he wanted to treat us fairly and that he was open to dialogue etc. and two weeks back he removed at a stroke three years of our old age pension entitlement for anyone fifty years or younger. And that is the type of equality and fair treatment that we are going to get. There's lots more of that coming down the track. The trade union movement in my view should not be pursued in any way as acquiescent in the slide and the shift of a substantial section of the working class into poverty that is being targeted over the next number of years and that we have to be prepared to resist with every need at our disposal including industrial action. The Irish people because of the implications of this agreement are entitled to vote on that and we're asking conference to support a referendum on the IMF/EU bailout.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Tom. Secunder?

Tom Creedan, Waterford Council of Trade Unions

Tom Creedan from the Waterford Council of Trade Unions. We anticipate that opponents of this motion are going to say that a referendum is not necessary and it wouldn't be helpful. We'll be told that it'll probably be hardful populous gesture and we shouldn't do it. We don't doubt that we'll be told that a no vote could undermine the credibility of the Government in its efforts to persuade the European Union that Ireland is willing to endure the hardship. Exactly. That's what should happen.

We should oppose the efforts of the Government to asset strip our community. We should do that because we believe there is a Better Fairer Way. We've had referendums on EU treaties which had far less damaging effects on our economy and society than the EU/IMF package. This time, what's happened as Tom has pointed out we've had imposed upon us as a social responsibility the requirement to bail out private investors. This is the most serious decision ever taken in the history of the State and the people have had no say in it. However this is just business as usual, it's the way we do things around here. When we, the people rejected the Nice Treaty, when we rejected the Lisbon Treaty, the Taoiseach

had a constitutional responsibility to the EU that the sovereign people had rejected those treaties. In fact the Taoiseach told the EU that the sovereign people made a mistake and that they would be told to change their vote and that's what happened. The Government now claims that it has an electoral mandate to implement the demand of the IMF. It doesn't. It has a mandate to burn the bond holders. It has a mandate to renegotiate the deal and get a better payment rate. The Taoiseach told us yesterday that Ireland has lost its economic sovereignty. Article five of the constitution says – 'Ireland is a sovereign independent democratic State'. Well we have lost our sovereignty, we have lost our independence and our democracy is not the Government of the people, by the people, for the people, it's Government of the people by the IMF for the foreign investors.

We're not all in this together. The rich are not taking any losses to keep us safe. We are taking losses to keep them rich. We're told that if we don't obey the IMF we will face dyer retribution and humiliation. This is a crude and transparent policy of intimidation of an entire people. We must demand a national referendum on the issue of the private investor bailout and if it is a no vote, and it should be a no vote, it will show that the payment by the Government of protection money to foreign banks is being done in defiance of the people. We is the trade union movement must take a leadership role in resistance to the demolition of our essential services in our society because we know there is a Better Fairer Way.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you delegate. Now the mover of motion number 13 on the corporation tax rate on behalf of the AHCPs, Dave.

Dave Thomas, AHCPs

Dave Thomas from the AHCPs. All eyes are focused on Ireland at this particular point in time. We read constantly of attempts by other member states to increase its corporation tax rate in exchange for interest rate reduction under the EU/IMF programme. The AHCPs strongly supports the Government message that there will be no change to Ireland's corporate tax rate. It is crucial that this message continues to be decimated nationally and internationally at every opportunity. It is a well known fact that Ireland's 12 and a half percent corporation tax is critical to supporting our economic recovery and employment growth. It is the cornerstone of our industrial policy. Certainty is a key element desired by investors and any change to the tax would be seen as a major change in policy by the Government and would result in an increased uncertainty about the future direction of the Irish economy and its attractiveness to foreign investment. For a small country like Ireland aligning ourselves to the EU was a vital strategic move to encourage foreign direct investment. Many companies viewed Ireland as a progressive nation that could provide a European base and this view still holds today. The Government must make sure that they do everything possible to bring more industry and jobs to this country.

Despite the challenging economic environment of recent times the world needs to know that Ireland continues to offer a highly attractive proposition for foreign direct investment. We have maintained our position as a knowledge based economy which translates into more jobs for our workforce and has hugely contributed to the current export led recovery. In 2010 almost 11,000 new jobs were created. A total of 126 foreign investments won and 47 companies invested in Ireland for the first time. The world needs to be reminded how open and transparent the Irish taxation system is. Our low corporate

tax system does not discriminate based on company size or ownership. It features a low tax rate applied to a wide base. The corporation tax remains a key policy tool for Ireland. Importance only grows given Ireland's loss of competitiveness in the boom years and the fiscal restraints imposed by the recession. We are geographically and historically a peripheral country in Europe. A low corporate tax rate is a tool to address the economic limitations that come with being a peripheral country as compared to core countries. Indeed many multi-national corporations have suggested that it's likely that if much of the foreign direct investment that comes to Ireland went elsewhere it would be lost to Europe in its entirety.

The recent publication of the common consolidated corporate tax base directive is another potential threat. The Government must continue in its defence of Ireland's right to decide its own taxation measures. Our 12.5% corporation rate tax is our competitive advantage. Changes to it would reduce potential GDP growth and adversely affect employment and reduce the economies debt service incapacities. It must be maintained. Almost 1000 companies including many household names have chosen Ireland as the hub of their European networks because of the combination of well educated, young and English speaking workforces. High productivity levels, membership of the EU and a pro-enterprise taxation regime. We need to continue to attract inward investment notably in the knowledge intensive sectors. We must ensure that the FDI into Ireland remains a key strategy. I move this motion. I understand that the executive committee will be proposing to remit the motion and we've no problem with that.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Dave.

Just while we are waiting for the seconder can I alert members of the standing orders committee to the fact that the chair of standing orders has asked me to ask them to convene in the standing orders committee room. If there are any members of the standing orders committee that are not aware of that meeting which is about to take place now.

Now, thank you delegates, and a seconder to motion number 13? Formally seconded, thank you delegate.

Now motion number 14 on site evaluation and resource tax in the name of the TEEU, an I call on the TEEU, Arthur. And can I call on the mover of motion number 15 on the creative industries to be ready to move as well please.

Arthur Hall, Technical, Engineering and Electrical Union

President, delegates, Arthur Hall, Technical, Engineering and Electrical Union. This motion is in two distinct parts. It calls in the first instance for a tax on the profits of land speculators and secondly it calls for a tax on the profits of the island gas multi-nationals.

On the first issue of a land valuation tax, we can actually go back 37 years to the Kenny Report which was produced and its agenda in 1973 was to study the rise the rising price of land for suitable for building, the causes in the increase of the price of land and to make recommendations for the betterment of the community as a whole. These land speculators and developers blinded by their greed have made huge profits from land speculation on these transactions they have made over the years. They should be, and

they must be taxed on their real earnings. And one asks the question, why after 37 years has no Government implemented any of the recommendations of the Kenny Report? Well the answer to that might lie in the fact that these speculators and builders have donated €13 million per annum to various political parties. Now just because we are in a recession it doesn't mean that the speculators have gone away, they will be back. The initial CSO report on this year's census tell us that more housing will now be needed in the future on the eastern seaboard, the midlands and the northeast due to an unexpected rise in population. So it is time to legislate now and let's not ignore what has gone before us. The final quote of the Kenny Report although 37 years old I think is still relevant today and it goes like this: *'the denser the population the more intensive the use of land becomes, in order that the limited area may be capable of furnishing the services required. The more complex the productive organisation of society, the more highly developed must be the control of land exercised by and on behalf of the community'*. So it's still very relevant today.

The second part of our motion concerns a resource tax on our national resources. I think people should remember that it was a gentleman called Ray Burke who sold off for a measly price exploration licenses to his friends in big business. And there is an excellent document out in the hall produced by SIPTU called 'Optimising Ireland's Oil and Gas Resources' and I would urge every delegate to get a copy and read it.

The Minister now responsible for our natural resources is an old colleague of this movement, Minister Pat Rabbitte. I would call on him to regularise the extraction of our natural resources and tax the profits made by these multi-nationals in a realistic and fair way for the benefit of all our communities. I urge your acceptance of this motion. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Arthur. Is there a seconder from the TEEU? Formally seconded, thank you delegates.

And now I call on the Equity to move motion number 15 on the creative industries.

Sarah McKeever, Equity

Sarah McKeever from Equity Northern Ireland. Motion 15 on creative industries.

President and fellow delegates, it is a remarkable fact that Ireland is unique in our culture which is outstanding. Our ability to be creative in creative cultures and arts is what defines us as a people worldwide. Many of us understand that the creative economy is a powerful economic drive in its own right and it brings in needed investment and provides long-term employment over reintrive industries which feeds into the creative sector. Those jobs are also long lasting and their skill base can be used for cutting edge new technology. In particular the digital information technology economy.

There is also an understanding particularly within the federation of cultural and artistic unions that there is a seamless relationship between the productions of theatre and the productions of film, television and new media. We also believe that there is an understanding shared by both Governments for the creative industries to bear fruit. It needed those Governments to invest in the sector. That investment was given particularly in the Republic where the Minister for Culture ensured that Irelands investments, the highest

per capita per head of population in the arts. Although the North argued for great investment from the Government in Stormont, whilst appointing a Minister in Culture still it is low in funding per capita per head.

However, like many of you here the economic crisis has put this understanding in jeopardy. The public sector is not only bearing the brunt of the crisis but is also the public sector is now being blamed for the crisis. What an injustice as working people and their families have to pay the price with redundancies and poor services while bankers and property sectors hide in the shadows.

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions has to be at the centre for ensuring that there is an alternative. It is up to all of us through Congress to fight for investment within the public sector and that includes investment within the cultural industries. Both the government in the North and the Republic need to be challenging decisions on spending. If those spending decisions are truly based on people's needs and on Ireland's needs. Congress also has to guard against the terms and conditions which water down workers' rights as employers use current economic situations to bring them to poverty level wages. This is true in our industry as it is in many others. Television and film companies have long been trying to deny performers rights with so-called buy out or lawyer contracts. It is our belief that if a production is being financed by public money then it should be using an industry standard terms and conditions. This belief should also apply to independent organisation who receive public funding but also those publicly funded broadcasters like RTE and BBC respectively whether they are commissioned in the North or the South of Ireland. Please support the motion. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Sarah. Is there a seconder? Seconder? Formally seconded? Thank you delegate.

Are there any delegates now wishing to speak on motions 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 or 15?

Terry Delaney, Communication Workers Union

Mr President, Congress, Terry Delaney, Communication Workers Union, speaking on motion 13. My union supports the terms of the motion for all of the reasons set out by the mover, however we do enter a caveat where low corporation tax is concerned. It is our view that companies that are not acting in the national interest should not be the beneficiaries of low corporation tax. And let me give you an example of one such company, that my union is currently in dispute with. It's Vodafone Ireland. Vodafone made €120 million profit last year. They paid a dividend back to the parent company in the UK of 125 million, bringing the total dividends paid since they set up in Ireland to over two billion. And what's the source of the rown between the Communication Workers Union and Vodafone? Well they called us in three weeks ago and told us it was their intention to offshore, or as we would call it export, jobs of our members based in Dublin and Dundalk to India and Egypt. Now under no set of circumstances should that company be the beneficiary of a low corporation tax.

Furthermore, when we asked the chief executive and his senior management team could they give us guarantees with regard to the 500+ jobs in additional jobs in the call centres, that they wouldn't be offshored. Their answer was no. And ultimately firms like Vodafone can be the beneficiaries of a low corporation tax can increase their profits without

actually leaving Ireland and that set of circumstances should be totally unacceptable. Finally we have the ludicrous situation where my union is in a standoff regularly on the phone now there is going to be a dispute in Dundalk possibly before this day is out and the reason for that being is, Vodafone have flown in managers from Egypt, they have instructed our people to train up these managers, to enable those, managers go back to India and in turn train the staff in India to take the jobs of Irish workers. And not withstanding all of that they are the beneficiaries of low corporation tax and that has to end, and end soon.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Terry. Sorry delegates, I want to call on the chair of standing orders.

Michael Sharpe, Chair of Standing Orders

Thanks President. Michael Sharpe, chair of standing orders. Standing orders committee report number 4. Standing orders commend you president and the delegates for rattling through the business. It looks like we may get through the schedule of business before the deadline of one o'clock. And in the event of that happening we have received two emergency motions. One from SIPTU on whistle blowing and the nursing home closures and another on saving the assets of the Irish people which I understand you already know about. And standing orders recommend that these if you do get finished the scheduled business this morning before one o'clock that these two motions be taken then.

Can I also to bring to attention of the delegates that we have been informed of the death of Andrew Boyd who died this morning. Many of you, particularly those of you from Northern Ireland would know of Andy Boyd he wrote extensively on the trade union movement and we have been asked president that you might move a vote of sympathy to his family on his passing. Thanks.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Michael. Sad news. You're moving standing orders report number four. Is there a seconder? Seconded, formally seconded? Thank you delegate. Is standing orders report number four agreed? Anyone opposed? So standing orders report number four is adopted and we will proceed to try to take those motions after this debate. Delegate.

Carmel Gates, NIPSA

Comrades, sisters and brothers, Carmel Gates on behalf of NIPSA. Now normally NIPSA would not comment on motions that relate specifically to the South but I want to speak from NIPSA on motion 13 because we feel that it is a motion that has a very particular relevance in the North and I know that the union moving and the Executive are supporting remission on this motion but I'm asking you to oppose it. And my question, the mover mentioned about the competitive advantage that corporation tax in the South can give and my question is, competitive advantage over who? Is it the job that might otherwise come to Newry? Should we in the North call for a reduction of corporation tax to 12.5% so that we can compete with jobs that might come South or should we say 11.5% because actually because of other exemptions and loopholes 12.55 wouldn't put us on an even keel. So who are we competing against because what we are getting tied up in is the arguments that capitalists use, the arguments that big business use and what we are neglecting is the argument that we as workers should use as internationalists as people who support each other and if we reduce as suggested corporation tax as a driver for the

economy what about lower wages, what about reductions in pensions, what about the facts that trade union organised firms eat into profitability. There are dangers that we start to sacrifice what we stand for in our efforts to fix capitalism and let's be honest comrades, capitalism isn't fixable and it's certainly not fixable by any of the solutions that we put forward because if they can't fix their own system, our suggestions for fixing it aren't going to work either. Now we should support as we always have done the redistribution of wealth, a fairer society. Not redistribution from the rich to from the poor to the rich as what's happening now but the other way about. The way we've always stood for it as socialists and rather than trying to fix capitalism and putting forward solutions for that we should be challenging it we should be putting forward political solutions, socialist solutions, alternatives to capitalism. Even in this recession the gap between rich and poor is getting bigger. This isn't going to fix it, this is going to mean that more money goes. In the North for example, if we introduce a 12.5% corporation tax 300 million will disappear out of public service funds into the hands of the CBI, the Institute of Directors, the Chamber of Commerce. It's money that will move from them from us to them. It will be a re-distribution of wealth but in the wrong direction so comrades I would ask you this is an important motion for all of us. We need to take a step back and analyse the issue, analyse economics not from a capitalist point of view but from our point of view and ask ourselves the question from the very beginning. Would we now suggest that in the South of Ireland that the capitalists should get away with only paying 12.5% corporation tax? It shouldn't happen in the North and it shouldn't happen in the South. We need that money back it's ours they are stealing the wealth we need to get it back for workers.

Jack O'Connor, President

Alright, Kevin.

Kevin Callinan, IMPACT

Kevin Callinan, IMPACT. Delegates, through our Better Fairer Way campaign ICTU has developed strong effective and fair policies to re-build our devastated economy. And IMPACT warmly welcomes the establishment of the Congress Economic Research Unit which will strengthen our hand. But let's be honest delegates, the people most responsible for the crisis have dictated the public debate on the policy agenda over the last three years. The final legacy of the previous Government was a four year economic programme based on further deflation. The very opposite of what we need. While the big business lobby including their friends in the media has poured huge resources into falsely re-defining the problem as one of overpaid workers, high taxes and public sector largess. Meanwhile national and international institutions are bent on re-building rather than re-forming the failed financial system with ordinary tax payers picking up the tab.

Let's be equally clear that developing and campaigning for alternative solutions doesn't mean behaving like the crisis doesn't exist. By supporting policies that are doomed to failure and damaging our credibility among union members and the wider public. For this reason IMPACT has strong reservations about motion 10 which we believe runs the risk of undermining the credibility of ICTU's arguments and the future work of the economic unit. We favour remission of motion 12 and would urge caution on motion 11 not least because many of the so-called political parties of the Left are part of a growing default fetishism. Ironically one shared by the extreme Right which however superficially attractive would mean catastrophe for our public services, pensioners and social welfare recipients. Such policies have little chance of winning credibility with the people we represent. Attempts to

dismiss the value of social partnership out of hand have been part of the false re-definition of the causes of the crisis. We can and should be self-critical about our past experience of social partnership. Over time we became too deeply embedded in the system by focusing too exclusively on pay deals we ended up endorsing Government policies that we could not influence even when they jarred with our own position on taxation, jobs and the wider economy. But a new framework remains a necessary ingredient in getting us out of the crisis. It is such an approach all sides, Government, unions, employers and the other social actors need to retain their independence. The achievement of such a dynamic process should remain a key objective of Congress policy. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Kevin. Adrian.

Adrian Kane, SIPTU

Adrian Kane, SIPTU. Delegates, speaking on motion number 13 corporation tax. I'm not so sure of the wisdom to have an agenda a motion urging the retention of such a minimum and ultimately unsustainable level of corporation tax. Our rate on debt as a trade union movement is to make this a more equal world. A just and more fair society. Our low level of corporation tax has taken on an extraordinary significance in recent times. It would appear to have become our last symbol of sovereignty; a sort of pseudo-nationalism has developed around it. The ultimate post-colonial resignation now prevails as it were, with our cap in hand so we're a poor nation sir. Unable to make anything hereby ourselves will you come over here and take what you want. Now I believe that we are better than this, we are a proud nation and a proud Republic. It's time that large multi-nationals contributed a bit more during these tough times. We must always be radical comrades but we must also be pragmatic and there is little point in having an empty preterit that ultimately leads to the flight of capital and yet more unemployment. But certainly in these tough times a surcharge off an additional 2 – 3% over a fixed term period would not be an awful lot to ask for. It would, at the very least be a token of social solidarity. We cannot continue to have this type of neutral debate in this country that thinks that low corporation tax does not in turn place more of a burden on the state and ultimately the tax payer. Our European colleagues have a point when they complain about our low level of corporation tax. Some of them I've granted talk with forked tongue but they have transferred significant structural funds over a considerable period to this country and have lost significant capital investment to Ireland and other low tax countries. It is not our job to argue for lower taxes on capital. Ours is a more noble cause than that, it is the position of SIPTU that it should be remitted back to the Executive and I think let a more intelligent debate begin in relation to our low level of corporation tax. Thanks very much.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Adrian. Pdraig.

Pdraig Murray, SIPTU

Pdraig Murray, SIPTU delegate and president of Irish Equity. I'm here to speak on behalf of motion 15 which I wholeheartedly support. Motion number 15 for us currently the most important part of this motion is where it says that any investment should always insure that workers are engaged on industry standard contracts no matter where the company is based. In Ireland the situation currently with regards to actors contracts, performers

contracts in general it's a full buy-out situation if you're engaged in a film or TV production it is on a full buy-out basis. This is something that we've been spending that last number of years trying to change. We're meeting great resistance from the producers from the employers for any change of this we've been to the Labour Relations Commission on it and we're being offered contracts which is a full buy-out which means that there is no more payment down the line no matter how successful a film or TV production is and not only is it denying the actual performer the revenue, the income from that but it's also denying any revenue to the state because the actors or performers will obviously be paying tax on that. So it's a campaign that we are fighting very hard here in the Republic and we've had great support from Equity in the UK also on the issue so I just urge everyone to support that motion. And thank you very much.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Pdraig.

Philip O'Rawe, Prospect

President, Congress, Philip O'Rawe from Prospect to speak against motion 13 on corporation tax and I fully agree with the speaker from NIPSA earlier about the impact of this particular motion particularly to those of us who are from Northern Ireland and the divisive nature of that. I want to quote from a very very important publication that's sitting out at the back of the Congress desk. This was commissioned about a year or so ago and it's called Pot of Gold or Fools Gold by Richard Murphy who is a leading tax economist. And it's specifically in the context of lowering Northern Ireland's corporation tax and he comes out very very much against that as a sensible approach for improving the situation in the North. I just want to quote one paragraph from the summary of that which I think really should set our position for motion 13 and the paragraph is simply this: 'the idea that the Republic of Ireland simply uses a low tax rate to attract **(new tape some text missing?)** low tax rates. The Republic also has no control foreign company laws or thin capitalisation rules. It has a relaxed approach to the taxing of foreign dividends and to transfer pricing regulation and it's relatively easily achieved corporate secrecy. In fact many companies in the Republic actually pay no tax at all. So I think that is from a leading tax economist who ICTU itself has commissioned to analyse the situation very very clear there that this notion that was put out in a proposition that somehow the low corporation tax is a huge benefit to the economy and so on and a driver of jobs is actually not the case at all. I'd urge everybody who hasn't already seen this publication to pick it up from the stand outside and urge you not to support motion 13 in fact to oppose it if it goes to that vote. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you delegate. Blair.

Blair Horan, CPSU

President, delegates, Blair Horan, CPSU. I note the reservations that Kevin Callinan expressed on motions 10 and 11 but I think probably the circumstances that we're at it's probably necessary nonetheless to pass them. But I do want to make a few points to try put it in context I think it's important that we never forget that the primary cause of the crisis we're in stems from the reckless economic policies of the last Government and also the greed of a capitalist class in this country that always seeks the quick route to easy money. And Jack in his address rightly made that point this morning.

Yes, there were design flaws in the Euro. They mainly stem from the fact that the neo-liberal view is that free capital markets are always a good thing. It's clear that that is not the case. We know that austerity will not work. We've set that out very clearly but I think we also probably need to face the reality that in a common currency the only effective stimulus is one that would come centrally from Europe and we need to fight that political battle, financial tax, Talbot tax as it is called, providing the finances for that. And I think we need to face up to some of the consequences of what all this means. Part of the problem with the EU/IMF programme is that there was no provision in the treaty for mutual assistance and the clause in the treaty for the EU/IMF programme is article 122 which was there to cover natural disasters. This permanent bailout fund will correct that in 2013. And yet we keep calling it a bailout and it's not actually a bailout because bailouts are specifically precluded under article 125 of the treaty. The German tax-payer is not allowed under the treaty to bailout Ireland, Portugal or Greece. Article 127 of the treaty provided for the ECB to exercise national supervision under financial institutions in each country. The European Council refused to activate that clause of the treaty for the ECB under the principle of subsidiarity. And that's one of the core problems that we face. Subsidiarity has been a key part of this crisis. Patricia made the point about Eurobonds and I think it is part of the answer in greater economic governance but we also have to face the consequence of that. The consequence of that is, greater tax harmonisation and it actually means surrendering fiscal policy I don't think there's anything wrong with that actually but we need to actually follow through on the consequences of some of the proposition we're putting forward and I think ya know let's pass these motions but let's be clear, we are going to have greater economic integration in Europe. Declan Ganly now wants to federalise the debt, grand, but if you federalise the debt you federalise Europe. Thank you very much.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thanks Blair. Jimmy.

Jimmy Whelan, UNITE

Jimmy Whelan, UNITE. President, delegates, I'm speaking in favour of motion 13. It's unfortunate to let ideology get in the way of reality. I sit on the craft EWC select committee. I have the costing's of all the craft factories in Europe. We come out second most expensive because of our standing costs. We're only second to Strasburg. If we hadn't got the lower corporation tax rate in this country multi-nationals would pull out and go to cheaper venues and that's a fact. We've the highest cost for energy, we've the highest cost for rates and things like that. And so ok, ideologically you'd like to see businesses paying their fair share but if it means losing hundreds of thousands of jobs in this country I don't agree. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Jimmy. Now is there any other delegate offering? No, well I accordingly call on the general secretary to respond to the debate.

David Begg, General Secretary of Congress

Thank you President and colleagues and thank you very much indeed for the debate and the interesting insights that it offered and I want to offer my appreciation to you for unanimously passing the executive council motion which is the embodiment of the economic policy which Congress has been following and is very pleased to see that that was unanimously passed. I have to just to ask you to consider a point of view about motions 12 and 13 and I think the movers anticipated and indeed I want to thank Dave of the AHCPs for accepting that the remission of that motion 13 if that is the view of the conference.

But first of all though just to speak on the Waterford Council of Trade Union motion that the two Toms spoke on. The executive council is not asking that to be opposed at all in fact, there are reasons I think while we perhaps need some further consideration in relation to the issues which are raised in it because we take it very seriously and there are some quiet deep questions in it. Essentially the proposition that there should be a referendum, the next question to that of course is well what precisely is the question that you would pose in a referendum? And I think that there would be at a level wide spread support for the idea that the population would be hugely opposed to the bailout of the banks but the fact is that that is already an accomplished fact and the question really should be, should we default on that particular debt.

Now, as the President outlined in some detail in his own excellent address this morning, there are consequences to a default which we can anticipate. Some we know exactly what they would be, others we can only speculate upon. But the questions that would arise would be first of all about the cut off of money supply to the country and that would mean then that the gap between income and expenditure to handle public services would be hugely compressed because whereas we spend around 55 billion a year we take in something like 34 billion and you can see immediately the consequences that would have for both public sector employment and for the quality of public services. We don't know what the long term effects would be on foreign direct investment, we don't know what the long term effect would be on companies trading in this economy in a very open European economy as it is at the moment and we can reasonably anticipate that there would be huge consequences for the banking system. However, that is not to say that that would not be an option in some circumstances, you can perhaps say that the way things are evolving with austerity being heaped upon austerity that the time might come when default would be the lesser of two evils. However our view is that that position has not arisen at this point in time and this is a changing dynamic I think it has to be recognised and we have to take account of that.

In relation to the motion 13 on the corporation tax, just to explain why we believe perhaps that it would be best to remit this motion, we think actually that Ireland needs a much more nuanced position on corporation tax which we have tried to articulate over the last couple of years. It is correct to say that tax competition is anti-social because it allows a race to the bottom in terms of social provision in Europe and it's understandable why many European countries would be very much against that and intellectually and philosophically I think we would hold that view ourselves. The difficulty of course is one of peripherality. How do you make a country on the western periphery of Europe equal to a country at the core of Europe and still have the same expectations of economic development. This is a justification I think for a much more sophisticated approach to taxation right across Europe. For ourselves in Ireland we have relied on the corporation tax as virtually the sole pillar of industrial policy. That is no longer good enough. We

need a better story for the future that will actually secure the industrial base of our economy because there are reasons to believe I think that whatever this short term resolution of the corporation tax issue that it will not endure indefinitely and the reason I say that is, that if you contemplate how this movie may end for Europe, it may end in a number of ways. If you examine at the moment what has been happening to the private bond holder involvement and what has been happening to the public supply of funds to Europe.

The ECB is gradually producing a kind of, or providing I should say covering fire for the withdrawal of some of that private money and whereas a year ago you know the bondholders were exposed to the tune of about I think 100 billion it's somewhat down to about 20 billion at this stage. And eventually it may be the case that the ECB is holding the whole stock of debt. And there may come a point where it will be realised that the overhang of that debt is so huge that it cannot actually be paid and almost by the back door you may have a Europeanization of that debt in the sense that it would involve the recapitalisation of European Central Bank. Now that is a story that can't be told politically to many of the countries in Europe because it looks simply like a fiscal transfer arrangement that would be unacceptable to many of the populations of these countries. But ultimately it may well be part of the solution, but the price for that solution will be as Blair pointed out quite correctly, deeper economic integration in Europe because EMU when it was established contained the instruments and the institutions for monetary union but not for fiscal union or for economic coordination as such. And quite clearly that is a major flaw in the Euro project and if it were to continue you know that flaw has got to be removed and dealt with otherwise the alternative is to the dissolution of the Euro itself.

So this movie as I say may end in quite a different way and we have to construct what we do and our policies in relation to that possible eventuality. And as the speaker from Northern Ireland mentioned this is a current debate, corporation tax in Northern Ireland and it has quite serious implications many of which you spelled out but one of them I think is interesting to look at. It is not at all clear what would happen to the block grant for Northern Ireland in the event of the introduction of this type of corporation tax and a number of commentators have been saying that actually it would whittle about 385 million off the block grant which would leave the economy of Northern Ireland even in deeper trouble than it is at the moment so there are very complex and serious issues involved in all of this. And I think that we shouldn't tie our hands too much on anymore at least than is necessary at any point in time in relation to any of these matters because as a number of people have recognised we are in the process of establishing an economic research unit in which we will have in addition to our chief economist, Paul Sweeney, we will have three, the services of three additional, at least three perhaps four high grade economists which will put us into a different space in terms of articulating the public discourse in this country over the year. So I think that we don't have to do these things, it is not that what speakers in the sentiments of the motions are necessarily wrong but at the same time we just need to give ourselves as much space as we possibly can and in that sense I think remitting the motions would be appreciated by the executive council.

Now I think that in relation to what I said on Morning Ireland the other morning and I am sorry if I upset anybody by my remarks but as you know yourselves when you are exposed to these things if someone throws a question at you you don't exactly know how to respond. I was tempted for a second to respond like Charlie Haughey did a number of

years ago and he said that like well like a lot of these Chinese leaders that go on into their 80's and 90's I think I'll still stay around but he was gone in three weeks. And I thought in the circumstances that mightn't be the most prudent answer so the one I gave I thought was the best I could do in the circumstances.

But anyway just to say to you though, I mean the difficulty with anger is that it isn't really an alternative, a substitute for carefully thought out strategies. I think if anger solved the problems Greece would have solved its problem now. That's not the way I would say that vast majority of Irish workers want to go. I think that if we go that route that we will lose the middle ground of Irish workers. It's quite interesting to reflect on the general election, the man we had here last night is in office by virtue of a turnout of 70.1% of the electorate and 60% of those people voted for parties of the central right. That is the realistic political position here in this country at the moment and for us as the leadership of the trade union movement all of us here collectively, we can't do a thing which takes Irish workers out into the open where they are cut to pieces by the forces of capitalism. We can't do that colleagues. We have to take a more considered and clever and you know nuanced approach. And for myself I am a social democrat, I have always said that to you I have not disguised that fact and the better fairer way policy is a policy which is social democratic. It is not about revolution. It is about reform of society. It is about insuring that the political economy approach applies to our problems. In other words, that economy is located in society and not the other way around because the other way around is what all of the economists think at the moment. When they analyse their problems in terms of what formula might work for the economy, it takes no account of people or anything like that. And what we have argued is, that politicians have to worry less about the economics of all of this and more about the politics for a sustainable society in Europe. But I will say this honestly to you, we are at a dangerous place, we have an enormous responsibility on our shoulders, at least that's what I feel personally. That is if this generation of trade union leaders in Ireland drops the ball it is not that we will have a society, which is some type of Trotsky socialist utopia. What we could quite conceivably get is an authoritarian right wing politics, which would be to the detriment of us all and the detriment of society for a long time to come and we must not provide the leadership which leads us into that abyss because future generations would not forgive us for doing that.

Jack O'Connor, President

Now delegates I'm going to move to vote on those motions. All those in favour of Motion 10 in the name of NUMRT please show. All those against. Abstentions. I declare the motion carried with a number of abstentions.

Motion 11 in the name of Dublin Council of Trade Unions all those in favour please show. All those against ... abstentions. I declare the motion carried with a number of abstentions. Motion No. 12 and there has been a request from the executive for remittance of this motion can I ask the Waterford Council of Trade Unions as to whether they are prepared to accept remission. You're not prepared to accept remission Tom? No okay, so now we move to the vote on the motion in the name of the Waterford Council of Trade unions. All those in favour please show.

Point of Order. I'll take a Point of Order.

President if there is a motion to remit, that should be voted on before we deal with the substantive motion, in my judgement. I think you're right.

Jack O'Connor, President

The Waterford Council of Trade Unions are not accepting a remission. It has been pointed out that I should have put remittance to the floor. All those in favour of remitting Motion No. 12 please show. All those against ... Tellers. Can we have the Tellers please? And the tellers are Annette Dolan, Paul McSweeney, Pat Bolger, Ray Rafferty, Diarmuid De Paor, and can the tellers organise themselves please? Have we got the tellers in place? Are we ready to call the vote? Okay. All in favour of remission No. 12 please show and please keep your cards up to allow the tellers to count. Now delegates can you take your hands down? Now all those against remission of Motion 12. Okay delegates you can take your hands down we have a result. The tellers advise that those in favour of remission amounts to 244 and those against amounts to 163 so remission is carried. I declare the motion remitted.

Now Motion No. 13 on the Corporation Tax Rate in the name of the AHCPs and again there has been a request for remission of this motion and the AHCPs has indicated that it is agreeable to remittance. So all those in favour of remittance please show. All those against ... abstentions. I declare the motion remitted by an overwhelming margin.

Now Motion No. 14 in the name of TEEU on Site Valuation and Resource Tax all those in favour please show. All those against. Abstentions. I declare Motion No. 14 carried.

Motion No. 15 in the name of Equity on Creative Industries. All those in favour please show. All those against. Abstentions. I declare the motion carried.

And now given that we have some time available to us before the scheduled time for the lunch adjournment I want to invoke a Standing Order Report No. 4 which has been adopted earlier, which recommended that we take two emergency motions but these emergency motions, as far as I am aware, have not been circulated and the report has not been circulated and I wanted to put it to Conference, that if it is agreeable, that I would read the motions into the record and that we would allow them to be moved and seconded and put them before the floor for debate on the basis that **Standing Order Report No. 4** will be circulated as soon as possible. Would it be agreeable that I would proceed in that way? Are there any objections? So I'm going to read the motions into the record then.

First of all the **Emergency Motion entitled Saving the Assets of the Irish People** and the text reads as follows and I quote:

"Following the EU/IMF raid on the National Pension Reserve Fund to bail out the German and French bond holders the latest threat to the assets of the Irish people emerges from the McCarthy Report. In a paper reflecting the neoliberal ethos of the IMF and increasingly of the EU, privatisation of national resources as diverse as our forests and greyhound tracks is advocated.

Recently the most serious suggestions involve the sale of important infrastructural companies such as the ESB or National Airports and Bord Gais while the alternatives set

out in reports such as the Cahill Report on electricity transmission ownership are swept away. These companies are in the main profitable and provide good quality employment for many Irish people. More importantly they are valuable national assets built up through the hard work and dedication of generations of Irish workers.

We call on this Conference to pledge the ICTU to coordinate a structured resistance against the sale of any of these vital national assets. Such resistance should typically take the form of concerted political lobbying, consideration of selective action in threatened entities, mobilising community support for subsequent demonstrations, targeting local politicians, partition gathering etc. culminating in a National Referendum on the sale of the people's assets to be held simultaneously at all union offices throughout the country. The result to be presented to Government demanding appropriate action and that motion is signed in the name of the CWU, the ESBOA, IMPACT, MANDATE, SIPTU, TEEU, UCATT and UNITE.

Can I call the mover please? Formally moved. Is there a seconder? Formally seconded. Are there speakers? Anyone offering to speak? One speaker, Brendan.

Brendan Ogle

Comrades speaking in favour of the motion I'd like to find out the Conference, that the combination of the McCarthy Report and the Programme for Government referred to yesterday by An Taoiseach would see widespread destruction of our state assets and specifically comrades won't mind, I hope, if I focus on ESB. The combination of the McCarthy Report and the Programme for Government would effectively eliminate ESB in its entirety from the fabric and structure of Irish society. Because ESB, as a state owned electricity utility, reaches into every community and every parish in Ireland, North and South. The current economic crisis which was created by the collapse of free market capitalism should not be used by the present Government as an excuse or a reason to destruct the assets that have seen this country develop and grow, providing employment and project development for over 80 years and I'd like to speak and call for Conference to support the motion thank you.

Thank you Brendan any other speakers? So I'm going to now put the emergency motion entitled Saving the Assets of the Irish People to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against. Abstentions. I declare that emergency motion carried. And now I want to move on to the other emergency motion which was envisaged and provided for by in the Standing Orders Report No. 4 and again I'm going to read the text of that into the record and it reads:

Conference notes the recent high profile closure of a South Dublin nursing home by HIQUA and the consequent struggle of the employees for their legal entitlements from the homes owners. This conference acknowledges the bravery of the men and woman who came forward and cooperated with the investigation. Conference resolves to mandate the ICTU Executive to meet with the relevant Government departments to ensure enhance protections for those who whistle blow and in particular for those whose whistle blowing results in closure in their employment and the consequent loss of jobs. And the motion is to be moved by SIPTU and Louise.

Louise O'Reilly, SIPTU

Presidents, Vice Presidents, General Secretary, Brothers and Sisters, Louise O'Reilly from SIPTU to move Emergency Motion No. 2. Let me start by saying that we acknowledge and endorse the good work done by HIQUA and we commend their investigators for highlighting failures in our healthcare system. However for those who cooperate with the HIQUA Inspectors we must ask ourselves what happens when those inspectors go home? The recent high profile closure outlines in clear detail what many workers may potentially face, should they take the brave step and come forward to blow the whistle on their employer. What those workers face following the closure of the South Dublin nursing home was simply a case of blow the whistle and sing for you supper. This simply is not good enough. Those men and woman who were brave enough to come forward have done our elderly population and indeed our state some service and they were repaid by being pilloried in the media and they face dismissal following the closure of their employment. Speaking in the immediate aftermath of this closure the minister for health professed himself to be less than impressed with the way the workers had been treated. Now I might have another word that I would use but I'm not going to say it here. This motion seeks to mandate the ICTU to engage with all relevant Government Departments so that protections for those workers who come forward and blow the whistle are put in place as a matter of urgency. We must engage with these departments to ensure that when the HIQUA Inspectors go home there is something there to pick up the pieces. Our movement owes it to those brave men and woman who cooperate with Hiqua and who place their livelihoods on the line to ensure that we do all we can to protect them. Delegates I urge you to support this motion because we all want workers to be free to blow the whistle. We owe it to the vulnerable men and woman who depend on the care and to those who are vulnerable who also provide that care. Whistleblowers deserve our protection before, during and particularly after the inspection is over. Blowing the whistle should not mean sing for your supper. I move this motion, thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Louise. Is there a seconder? Seamus.

Seamus Dooley, National Union Of Journalists

Seamus Dooley, National Union of Journalists seconded this motion. In doing so there is very little I can do to add that eloquent speech which and I want to pay tribute to Louise and her colleagues for their work in this area and in their work in defence of vulnerable health workers. As Secretary of the National Union of Journalists, I too represent whistleblowers and I too represent workers much beloved by many of you I notice, who on a daily basis strive to shine light in the dark places and in seeking a whistle blowers act we also need once again to reaffirm our commitment to the protection of confidential sources and also to reformer the freedom of Information Act and there is a bit of hypocrisy within our movement about the Freedom of Information Act because quite frankly for many people it is an inconvenience. But what we need in this State is not a reform of one piece of legislation but rather an ethos of Government, which recognises that in a democratic republic, in a republic which values truth, honesty and integrity, there is no place for secrecy. I second this motion.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Seamus. Now are there any further speakers offering?

Patsy Doyle, Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation

Good morning my name is Patsy Doyle. I work with the Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation and I wish to support the motion. Just in terms of supporting people over the last number of years who've had course to rely on whistle blowing in order to get things done. I would strongly urge Conference to reflect that we continue to support these people, who at a time sees things that are going wrong, not really sure what to do about it and it tends to be that they see things and hear things for a long time before they have the courage to do something. So in terms of us supporting people and always keeping in mind that there must be no penalisation. I ask you to consider that at the moment there is a statutory no penalisation clause under the Health and Safety Act and then we also have protected disclosure under the HSC and I think that in terms of meeting the Government Bodies, I think that we have to ask for the protected disclosure and the rules of the protected disclosure to immediately applied to the private sector and that's what missing here because the nursing homes situations that people were brave enough to do, no protection exists for these people so in terms of going forward and working with managers who at the moment lack the courage to manage run and make decisions that have long lasting consequences, some people hesitate, some people work too quickly, so in terms of us supporting the people who see things and hear things that make them terribly uneasy, we have to ask and demand that no penalisation clause is applied. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Patsy. Any other speaker offering? No other speakers so I put the Emergency Motion in relation to whistleblower to vote. All in favour please show. All against. Abstentions. I declare the Motion carried. Now Delegates I have a few announcement to make. First of all I want again to remind you of the Fringe??? (303) Meeting on Palestine which is being held at 1pm in the Magerton Suite in the Gleneagle. There are a number of other things I want to make you aware of, the exhibitors outside want to make you aware, those who don't know, that there a number of things that you may be interested in. The Bloomfield House Hotel in Mullingar is running a draw for two nights, accommodation for two people. There is a weekend in Galway in the Carlton Hotel for two adults and two children. TM Roland Jewellery and Redmond's Photography in Rosscree are giving an opportunity to win a Dalton Irish diamond watch and a €500 portrait. You could win two nights B&B and a dinner on an evening of your choice at the four star Talbot Hotel in Wexford. Corn Market Financial Services is giving a voucher to €300 and the Ardboyne Hotel is offering a €25 gift voucher to every Delegate who visits their stand. And finally you can win an Ipad 2 by entering the draw of the Halegan Insurance Stand. Also in relation to future training needs some Delegates have been inviting to join a discussion on future training needs within the movement. This will take place at 1 O'clock in the Flesk Restaurant just beside the reception desk in the Gleneagle. So Delegates who are interested in participating on that discussion on future training needs 1 O'clock in the Flesk Restaurant just beside the reception desk in the Gleneagle. Now Delegates despite some technical errors I have been able to get you to lunch early and although this may appear a small thing, in a few years' time when you're on your deathbed you'll think of the importance of that ten minutes. That's a joke by the way. It is now ten to one and it would be very good if we could reassemble here at five minutes to two, thus to ensure that we did not lose more ground in these difficult times. So we're adjourned for lunch Delegates.

Tuesday 5 July 2011 Afternoon Session

Jack O'Connor, President

I'm going to call Conference to order in a minute so if there are people? We have a very small attendance for this session.

Good afternoon Delegates I'm calling Conference to order and in accordance with the earlier recommendation of Standing Orders we're going to take a presentation by Sallyanne Kinahan, Assistant General Secretary on the issues relating to the matters which were referenced in the report, the Principal Report, Section 5 on Congress Organisation which we were in the process of dealing with last evening. I'm going to call Sallyanne first and then we're going to have a video from Phillip Jennings who chaired the work of the commission, along with Phillip Bowyer whose on the platform, who'll I'll be introducing later.

Sallyanne Kinahan, Assistant General Secretary, ICTU

President thank you, Officers, Delegates, Observers, friends, just to say that I missed my landing flight yesterday and I have now been compressed into ten minutes now so I'm going to do my best to do justice to the presentation and obviously I've had to, if you like, edit it a little bit because it was planned for a closed session and now we're in open session.

Maybe just to start off with, where we're at in terms of union membership, the President mentioned yesterday that the union membership has fallen slightly. But in terms of where we are at, we have almost 800 thousand members across 49 unions and the density of membership in the Republic of Ireland has increased over 38% against people employees, and similarly in Northern Ireland there is a high level of density relative to where the majority of other countries, other than the Nordic countries are at across Europe. In Northern Ireland it's about 34% so we've seen this bizarre situation emerge where density over the last couple of years has actually increased as a direct result of what's happening in the labour market.

As I've said already 800 thousand people across 49 unions that I very much see this presentation as a primer to the debate that we're going to have for the rest of the afternoon about the commission of the trade union movement that call to action. We're working, operating in a markedly different context to the one we were working in a couple of years ago. We've got this continuing labour market instability, the unemployment figures haven't bottomed out yet. We saw from the release just out a couple of days ago that unemployment is continuing to rise. We have massively increasing long-term rates of unemployment where the figure is now almost 50% of those that are unemployed or long-term unemployed and we have fallen participation rates which is one of the really worrying effects of the current economic crisis and this is having a profoundly unsettling effect on people at work. So whilst the situation is grave out there the need for a Trade Union Movement, a strong Trade Union Movement has never been more pressing. So the need to build Trade Union Movement, the strength of the Trade Union Movement has to be our priority from hereon in. I'm going to go through, very

briefly with you, some member research. A lot of it is actually outlined in your Conference Report under Section 5 on Organisation but just want to take you through what I see as some of the kind of salient points and maybe to start with the reason why we conducted research and this was carried out over the last twelve months and the reason that we did it was really because we had the experience of a number of mass mobilisations to support the campaign, the Better, Fairer Way Campaign and in fact the turnout for any of the events that we organised was phenomenal. One hundred and fifty thousand people on the streets of Dublin. One the events that we organised or one of the campaigns around eight centres had over a hundred and fifty thousand people at eight different centres, and if you compare that even to into a UK context that would be the same as having a couple of million people out in the streets of London, the numbers that we managed to engage with. But the difficulty was that when it came down to actually kicking back against the measures that were being introduced, there was actually a major shortcoming, we could get the numbers out on the streets, but in terms of putting out that defence of kicking back, of actually having a voice heard over and above that of the kind of near libs interests or the rightwing interests, the voice of the businesses we just weren't managing to get the space.

So in looking at the concerns, we were looking at members, only members, looking at their work and life concerns, and looking at issues pertinent to trade union membership. So their attitudes towards their trade union membership, expectations of their trade union membership and most importantly trying to understand what is it that would kind of get members to act? So no surprise that the kind of real concerns of our members is around the economic situation, the jobs crisis, the financial insecurity and making ends meet. Everybody is affected by what is going on in the economy and in terms of the situation pertinent to their jobs, insecurity a huge issue for our members. In the private sector it's about redundancies, people losing jobs, having less work, losing pay and in the public sector it's about pay cuts, pension levies. People are angry and they are insecure. So looking at our own situation how relevant are we today to our members? I think the good news, although I don't want anyone to rest on their laurels, is that Trade Unions are very relevant to their members. So when we look at the situation compared to four years ago when we conducted a massive series under the lift project the situation hasn't changed, we're still seeing as relevant to our members to working families on this Island. But in terms of members attitudes towards their unions, there has been a somewhat of a softening of the position. You know, there is a lot to be gained from being a member of a union, our members absolutely believe that that is the case, but the position has softened slightly from the last time around and similarly in terms of their sense of pride around union membership. So what we're seeing is the insecurity that people are experiencing being carried out in terms of how they feel about their job versus their union and I think that this is something that we really have to watch out for.

In terms of the broad attitudes of our members, so unions remain relevant but attitudes among members are weakening. The benefits of being in a union have shifted towards protection of terms and conditions and that is because of the uncertainty and insecurity that they are experiencing and value is emerging as an issue. Okay looking at what our members do over and above being engaged or involved in trade unions, membership of organisations of community political, religious organisations. What has been happening over the last couple of years, believe it or not, even though we have a situation where people are feeling very insecure, they are actually turning to become more engaged in

other organisations. Sports organisations, voluntary organisations, community organisations, even fete organisations, people are becoming more actively engaged. So increased engagement in other organisations by our members but we then look at the Trade Union Movement and what is happening within the movement, there hasn't actually been any dramatic change in the last four years, in terms of the ongoing levels of engagement. About a quarter of our membership are engaged in the Trade Union Movement, but looking at issue of active engagement, and this is the issue that is really important to us, because these are the people who are going to perform the job within their workplace of organising their colleagues, responding to the needs of members. They are the trade union in workplaces. What we are finding, or what we have found is that levels of activism have declined and they have actually declined quite dramatically since this last time around. No big surprise because the job is getting tougher so it's really a matter of what is it we need to do as a movement to build that level of engagement and involvement, at a grass roots level, and for the people who are our members, the members of trade union movement to be empowered and to have the capacity to kind of perform the role that is expected of them at a local level. So what we know is that members are passively rather than proactively or actively engaged and there is little knowledge or awareness of the union beyond the workplace and hence the kind of challenge that we face in being a campaigning movement, in being an organising movement is that there is this disconnect and the job that we have to do now is to pull it all together. So know that there isn't a barrier to greater engagement because we can see that members of trade unions are increasing their engagement in other organisations. We also know that members are open to a greater level of contact from their union, as long as it is relevant to them and of value and I have to that the most important engagement and we know this from the research, is face to face engagement. And matters for every member but it matters most for younger members. So changing the situation that we face requires us encourage engagement by making it easy, mobilising members around issues that are a concern to them and enhancing their active involvement so getting them to feel that there is a sense of belonging to their trade union. So it is a critical time for us, we are at a tipping point, the recession is accelerated process of disengagement, there a desire for unions to provide, leadership, direction and certainty. Trust relative to other institutions remains high and this along with the need for greater solidarity sends a real opportunity for us but it will not last indefinitely.

I want to move quickly to the internal audit that we conducted around campaigning and communications across the trade union movement and you know very pleased with the response that we got back from you. But from your perspective what is it you want to see happen within the trade union movement? First of all in terms of the campaigning issues that your concerned to see us conduct it is around the defensive members rights and entitlements and improving conditions. In terms of union interests, it's about countering attacks on unions and on members and building unions strengths and in terms of socio economic and political issues it's the specific sectoral concerns, the jobs crisis, the economy's fairness and equality, that in a nutshell is the better fair way campaign. What do you want to see us do in terms of improving our effectiveness at the congress level and across the trade union movement? You want to see improved engagement yourself with your membership. You want to see more campaigning and lobbying action, greater collaborative working, more unified activity, you want resources pooled to learn from the lessons from any of the exercises or actions that we conduct and for us to build capacity and to train. So what we need to set out to do and working collaboratively is establish

best practice, develop research and analysis and we now will have the economic research unit to help us in that task, to undertake more kind of political and media surveillance so that we're top of what is happening and what is going on and able to respond to it. To look at developing our own communications, our own resources, our own media if you like, whether it's digital media or print media, that's one of the things that we were tasked to look at, to provide training and to develop and planned and strategic approach to communications. Just to touch on this very briefly, well we're looking at the challenge that we face and through the audit we learned that in terms of our connection to our membership we're only actually assured that we are getting a message out and whether is received or not is another issue, to about a third of the membership and I think this probably highlights the challenge that we face in communicating with and engaging and mobilising trade union members. So that we have 49 unions and also 49 voices but what we're about now is trying to reach a point where we have a unity of purpose and approach. Delegates there is a strategy that has been developed by the communications group which was actually tasked by the Executive Council and it's comprised of the key or the lead people with responsibility for communications within individual unions. They have come together under a sub group that's been set up by the Executive Council and have been working on executing much of the communications and campaigning activity over the last year and a half. But more recently the group, based on its knowledge and learning from the research that was undertaken, and from the experience that we've had has developed a strategy.

I would love to spend the next hour talking to you about it but unfortunately I don't have the time but just to say the five key goals if you like that we are working together to try and achieve and it's a huge task when you think about it because it's all about resetting the work of Congress and resetting the work of unions so that we are working in a collaborative and coherent way. So it is about the challenge that we face demonstrating the relevance of trade unions and the text is in your reports, I'm not going to go through it in detail. To communicate the value of union membership, I mean something which we don't necessarily do particularly well. To speak with greater unity, to provide an alternative viewpoint and again having the economic research unit is going to aid us greatly in doing this. To create the momentum for change by retaking the leadership of that progressive policy and to increase the impact and efficiency of all of our activity, it all makes perfect sense, but actually making it happen is a massive job of work but I want to at this point also pay tribute to the Executive Council for having the foresight to do this and for the unions and the communications experts within the unions for making this a priority of their activity. Because what this is all about colleagues, it's about the need for us to demonstrate the strength of the 800 thousand members we have, the largest civil society organisation on this Island because the task that we have is to address the imbalance of power between workers and employers. We know that there is a better, fairer way, we have a huge challenge on our hands and maybe just to leave you with the most recent campaign that we have commenced. It's the campaign against the Bruton proposals to dismantle or undermine the wage setting mechanisms of the JLC's and it is the workers, our members being at the fore of the story, telling their story and being the front of the campaign. So colleagues thank you and I look forward very much to the rest of the debate.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Sallyanne and now just to proceed with our debate. We're going to have a short video featured Phillip Jennings who is the general Secretary of the Global Union UNI and Phillip very kindly agreed to accept an invitation from the Congress to chair the work of the commission and to bring an international perspective to it. Unfortunately the conference clashed with a UNI Global Conference which he's obliged to attend and accordingly he's going to speak to us via video. The arrangement which he entered into was to be accompanied by Phillip Bowyer And Phillip until about a year ago was the Deputy General Secretary of the Global Union UNI and prior to that was General Secretary in his own right because there was a merger between global unions. Phillip Bowyer has worked very intensively on the ground with the work of the commission and he will be speaking to us shortly after this video of Phillip Jennings so if we could show ...

Phillip the General Secretary of Global Union and it's been a great pleasure and a privilege to share the commission on the future of Irish Trade Union Movement. It's a task which I have relished, it's a task which I have enjoyed. I have to say I didn't hesitate to accept this job when it was first presented to me and now we are now in a situation after our first year of work, we can now present a report to you which is not an ??? report as such it is a call to action. I would like to thank all the members of the commission and all the people present in the room today for their cooperation and after this brief message Phillip Boy will go further into the conclusions of this call to action. Well since we've started our work, the world has changed, Europe has changed and Ireland has changed. Our financial crisis became an economic crisis, which became a labour market crisis and a jobs crisis. We have an economic crisis, a social crisis, in terms of unemployment of precarious working situation and in the meantime we have a new political situation in the republic of Ireland, with the elections which have taken place and the change of Government and the Tory lead coalition in Northern Ireland. The rules of the game have changed in all aspects. We have a new labour market reality, we have a new workforce reality, we have a new workplace reality, based on precarity and insecurity. All of these things demand new responses from us.

At a global level I can just share with you that in 2012 there will be just 8 global union federations. The manufacturing unions will be coming together in 2012 which follows the coming together of the ??? unions in the year 2000, 8 global unions covering the entire planet. We should learn from this experience and also adapt to this experience. New realities on the ground, demanding new responses. We started from a position of strength, a trade union movement in Ireland which represents 800 thousand people, a density level which is competitive in international terms, I know you can do better but nevertheless these are strengths. We also know the very specific situation of the ICTU being present throughout the Ireland of Ireland in the Republic and in the North and then of course the unions based in the UK, some of them have been members in the Republic, some have been members in the North and some being present in both. We can work with these realities to build a new future here. The last report which was done was in 1974, at that time there were 90 unions, today there are 49. I've not met one single person in all of the evidence that we have taken that says this is a structure that is going to be sufficient to take us into the future, not just to meet today's challenges but the future challenges. Therefore as opposed to waiting eighteen months or two years to produce a weighty tome of hundreds of recommendations, we've decided to turn this logic on its head and to have an approach which is active, involving, which means that you yourself

has to get engaged in this process now, not just as people who are giving evidence but to shake this trade union movement to meet those challenges. That's why this is a call to action, this is a sense of urgency. I was at the ICTU Executive with Phillip and the commissioners on March the 1st. It was very clear from every union leader present there was sense of urgency, that people were looking for new answers, that people weren't looking to protect the so called status quo. Therefore we want to meet this desire for change, this eagerness for change. We're calling for a new strategic vision for the Irish Trade Union Movement. We're looking for a new economic vision for this country. We are seeing around the World how this trade market ideology is destroying society, it's destroying jobs and it's doing its best to destroy our movement. Our movement is being tested like never before. There are leaks out there and new experiences everyday in Ireland that will prefer a world without the Trade Union Movement. Take this threat seriously. Therefore a new economic vision, a new strategic vision, we want to put together your best people on the organising front at the level of the ICTU, to build a new strategic plan, to take the message to new generations and to depart to the workforce and workplaces which are not yet organised. An economic vision, a strategic vision, we cannot ignore the role of individual unions. This is not just a matter for the ICTU Executive. We therefore suggested that we bring the clusters of unions from sectors together. They are already doing this in the Northern Ireland, it works. We can do this for the ICTU as well and the task is not just of a general discussion about how things can be better. How are we going to change things in terms of organising? What strategic vision do you have to take the message to existing workers and to the new generations? So therefore we are looking to work with you in this process, to have a hands on approach to bring about change. There is possibility to improve the work in legal cooperation, in health and safety and above all we need a new communications plan. You have the support of the Irish public. The evidence that we have received from an opinion poll taken are that you have a good place in Irish Society. They recognise that Irish Society is a better place with you. We have to build on this sympathy that is there, not take this sympathy for granted. Therefore I think, in terms of a new vision for the country, in terms of a new economic vision, a new social vision, a new union vision, we have to be able to communicate this to all of the Irish public and to all the Irish Political Institutions and above all to the Irish media. Therefore it's been a pleasure for me to take the process this far. I regret very much I can't be with you directly. This is a video clip that we put together here at the Union Head Office. I now hand over to Phillip Bowyer to introduce the report. I wish you a successful Conference. This is a call to action and I ask all of you to meet that call with action, with change, that when we come to 2012 we have a new ICTU, a new vision for the country, a new vision for the Irish public, and a new vision for all working people, which will bring decent work and fulfilling lives. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

I should have said in introducing Phillip that he along with Phillip Bowyer led a dramatic restructuring of Global UNI and UNI is now regarded as one of the most dynamic if not the most dynamic global union organising across the services sector of the economy and organising among some of the most vulnerable people in the world. So we want to show a very short film which is relevant in this context before I introduce Philip Bowyer So do we have that second piece? I don't know what the relevance of it is but anyway ... I now want to introduce Phillip Bowyer Who I have said has been working closely with the commission and bringing an international perspective to our work and indeed a very experienced international perspective and so Phillip to introduce the report.

Phillip Bowyer

Thank you very much Jack. Let me tell you that was a rather unusual experience for me, sitting on the stage with the impression that my former General Secretary was speaking behind my back. I know he did sometimes but it was unusual. I would like to start by thanking all of those people who worked together on this report. I know I tried to contribute myself but there were a lot of other people involved. First of all the unions who gave everything, many who sat patiently with me, with Liam as I explained the views on this subject of change in the Trade Unions. To the Northern Ireland Committee who we met on a number of occasions, who came forward with a lot of suggestions about how we should work, to the Congress Committee, like the Woman's Committee, the Youth Committee, to the staff in the offices in Dublin and in Belfast, to those members of staff, especially who gave us briefs on the economy, the labour market and the communications campaign of the organisation. All of these have been very helpful and for me just a kind of special work of thanks to Liam Berney who acted as the secretary who helped us put together this report, who contributed to the report, but also just for me, helped me arrange all my visits to Northern Ireland and to Dublin that went into this work. So it's been a collective experience, we ended up with a report that we agreed on the commission to put forward to this conference.

Now we heard an awful lot about the economic and political situation this morning and yesterday no doubt and I've no intention of going into any detail of that background. But it is very important to understand the very serious situation against which we are looking at this question of what the Trade Union Movement must do, what the Trade Union Movement must look like in the years to come and these are summarised as well in the report, but I'd just like emphasise a number of the aspects which I think are key in that economic situation when we consider the future of the unions.

The first is that this situation is putting great pressure on us as unions in the places were up to now were very strong. There is enormous pressure, whether it be in the Republic or in Northern Ireland on public spending. There are threats to public services and that's were we've had in the past our strongest unions, unions with a very high union density. The next point is simply the increasing levels of unemployment resulting from this economic crisis. Unemployment means less jobs and it means less unions jobs and it means less members.

We've also seen in recent decades more long term structural changes, the changes in manufacturing industry. Brought on partly by globalisation and for other reasons but manufacturing industries which in the past formed a strong base for the trade union movement here and in Northern Ireland, and with that decline again we lose a very important area for the strength of trade unions. And there's new areas of activity which have grown up, the areas which I personally am very familiar with, for instance in the areas of communications, banking and retail services, which have changed beyond recognition and are going on changing. Without traditional employers, what one time dominated the market, become less and less important in relation to the overall market. We have many more competitors in those fields and competitors which it's been very difficult for us in the past to organise. And so the places were we are organising key industries, key service sectors, the unionised part of those service sectors has become even smaller.

And finally I think was brought home to me in many of the discussions which I had with unions around the country, was there really has been a cultural change going on in recent years. Trade Unions have over a century developed ways of working, which some of us love of course, our normal conferences, our thrilling rules revisions conferences, our meetings with our reports and report backs and minutes and all the rest of it. But frankly what's come home to us is that in a newer generation these are not exactly what give people a buzz, these are not the things which attract a new generation to Trade Unions. And so all those changes have taken place which threaten the strength of the Trade Union Movement and I think it's quiet easy or it would be quiet easier for us to portray ourselves of really being in the middle of a storm, where are faith is being determined by forces beyond our control. The globalisation of the economy means that many of those employers that we work with are frankly countryless. They owe no allegiance to any country, they will go wherever they can work. That globalisation of the economy means yes we can talk to our Governments in our Countries but are they really in control of it? Don't we also need to develop that influence in that work with organisations such as the European Union or the International Monetary Fund, the G20 and many other International Organisations which have such a profound effect on our national situation. So as I said it would be easy to portray this in doom and gloom kind of terms, that we're under attack on all fronts and our means of changing the situation are diminishing. I don't if anybody used to watch Dad's Army on the television, I used to love it, there was one guy called Sergeant Fraser and when anybody asked him what the situation was he'd we're doomed, we're doomed and that was about as far as he went. But of course we know that the way out of this is for us to fight back. If we just sit and do nothing then of course all of those major forces are gradually going to erode the Trade Union Movement, in this country and in other parts of the World. And so there is no solution for us in sitting still, even when we are in comfortable positions and there are unions in comfortable positions, face it unions with high organisation rates, steady income, decent membership, it looks as if you can if you can go on for a very long time. But if the general Trade Union Movement is being weakened, if across the whole of the economy the level of organisation is being weakened, then eventually it starts to get at the organised sector.

Any this is what I think Phillip Jennings was referring to in that film when he talked about some of these effects. If you look at what is happened in the United States in the last year, it should be a lesson to all of us. There in Wisconsin and in other States, finally after weakening the Trade Union Movement so that it's down to about 13% of the American population, probably only 3 or 4 or 5% in the private sector are organised the political powers that be in many places have now turned on the public sector unions, it's quite openly just trying to take away their trade union rights and that's the kind of last battle for the American Trade Union Movement and that's the situation we don't want to get into. So how do we see this in the commission? I think it's not doom and gloom. We see as we said in several presentations here that we start from a strong position. This is I repeat the biggest civil society organisation in all of Ireland. There is 800 thousand members, that's a fantastic base to start from. It's an organisation which covers not just the two jurisdictions of Northern Ireland and the Republic, but it covers social and political and religious boundaries in a way which no other organisation can so it's a very important cohesive force in this society. And it is still very well organised compared to many trade unions organisations in the World. You know there are unions in Europe now which are down to 3, 4, 5% organised in certain places. That's a very hard place to be, but in Ireland we're

still in a place with substantial membership, a substantial level of organisation. But as I said we can't stand still because if you stand still the only way is down.

And so there is indeed at this moment for sense of urgency about how do we make this movement stronger? How do we build on this strength that we've got to make an even stronger trade union movement? Now a commission as we've said talked to many people and took lots of evidence and I must say there are lots and lots of ideas which came up which will be used again as the commission continues its work. But report doesn't go into them. The last thing which we wanted to do to you was to present one of those traditional reports were you would get 200 pages of wonderful economic political analysis, analysis of the labour market and so on, and were you would come to this congress or vote for it and say that's a very good heavy intellectual report and then of course it would be put in a drawer and never seen again. And that's the faith which we wanted to avoid, so that's why we've adopted the strategy which we have with this report. It's not a blueprint, it's not some commandments on high telling everybody what to do. What we try to do is identify key issues where we believe movement can take place, key issues where change can take place, if people want that change to take place. And what we're trying to do in this report is to ask you to allow us to construct processes to encourage, to push, perhaps even to shout and scream sometimes at affiliates of the organisation to move along that path of change and that's why we gave it this title of a Call to Action. Because in the end it's you, in your unions, in your individual unions, who have to decide what the changes are going to be. It's you who have to decide that the time has come to get rid of some of our old traditions and prejudices and whatever else and take that leap, not into the dark but the leap into the future which is needed if we are to continue building this trade union movement.

And most of these specific actions are highlighted at the end of the report, I must admit I thought was ten points but when I came to look at it they've suddenly been transformed into eleven, I like decimal systems, I would have stuck to ten I think but now we have eleven. So there are eleven main areas of action which we propose at the end. I won't go into them all but just highlight some of the ones which we think need action fairly urgently.

The first one is, which has been referred to also earlier, the need for the commission to draw up quickly a statement setting out a vision for the Congress, setting out a vision of society based on fairness, based on social solidarity, based on alternative to mere acceptance of free market forces. To set forward a vision of a society where we as workers do have control over our own destinies through our own actions and through our own unions. Now I know that sometimes this might seem, I don't know a bit of a silly proposal, you know it sounds a bit when you say it like that like these things that you see on the walls of buildings were they put out the mission of the company saying that we love all customers and we're going to love every single customer individually and the customer is the most important person in the world, and which we all know don't mean very much. But I think the idea behind this is different, when we did it in our own organisation, when as Jack said we put together four different internationals into one global union. One of the things to try to get people to agree on is what really are the key purposes of this organisation? Because once you can get everybody speaking from the same song sheet and what are the key strategic objectives of an organisation then you immediately start to make it stronger because you use that to judge your own actions, to see if an action

actually came up to your own expectations and so on. Now for us in Uni I must say we're sometimes too simple. We said the purpose of this organisation was to increase our power, that was it. And unless anything that was proposed you spend one hundred thousand dollars on this, 50 thousand dollars on that, seventy thousand dollars on that. Unless we could see that it produces an increase in our power by increased membership or increased influence we said it's out. In this day and age we have to make priorities. And so the idea is that we get this vision statement which says where we're going, it provides the platform, not just for our own internal activities, but activities on a general level towards society, saying these are our standards, whatever other politicians and political parties are doing this is what the Trade Union Movement stands for. It provides the face of the Trade Union Movement and the process of getting that is very important in creating unity. So that's the first thing that comes under these strategies which we are proposing.

The second one is that really the way forward we all see as organising. Now we can have lots of arguments sometimes a bit theological about whether we're in service organisation or organising organisations and so on. But the truth of the matter is at the end of the day I think there is a general conclusion that if we're to keep the Trade Union Movement as a whole, strong in these lands, then organising must part, and a key part in that strategy. And so we're calling for a new strategic plan to increase union density across the Republic and across (new tape some text missing?)

Unions cannot see themselves on their own, individually having the resources to put into these strategic organising campaigns, whether it be for themselves or for the wider movement. It simply takes a lot of money, a lot of expertise, a lot of people who know about organising and so on which we don't have. So what we're saying is we need a strategic plan for the whole of the Trade Union Movement and we're asking unions to come together in a new strategic organising committee, not one of these permanent committees that's going to be there forever by the way, but one that has a job to do and when its job is done it's finished. And the idea is to sit down and decide those areas which should be key in terms of the objectives of where we organise, it can be sectors, it can be different industries, it can be individual companies, but to try and get something that looks like a strategic plan for the Trade Union Movement as a whole.

And then the next and very important part of this is I know it's easy to say that with a population this size, forty-nine unions are too many and it's a very easy thing to say until it's your union that somebody says that's the one we're getting rid of. But I think there is a general agreement that forty-nine unions are too many and somehow we have to look at ways of pulling the strength of those unions together. But it's not something that can be decreed from on high, it's not something that can be decreed by this Commission, it's something which unions themselves have to devise and they have to decide on themselves because it's in their interest and they see it as in their interest.

But one of the things which we have seen as a way forward is to start bringing together groups of unions under sectoral headings. Getting unions to sit down together and say in our sector, in our industry, what are the real strategic objectives? What will make us all stronger? What can we work together on which will benefit all of us? That might lead to structural changes in the organisation, it might lead to federations or merges or whatever. But we believe, even without that, it can lead to a much stronger, more focused, effective Trade Union Movement. And it was decided at that meeting which we had in March with

all of the affiliates that this should not wait, that we shouldn't wait for this report to take place and say let's get everybody endorse it and then we'll start work. We started already, as you'll see in the report by helping, facilitating, urging people in different groups to come together and already groups in the teaching profession's, the public services, communications retail and banking have met and are discussing ways in which they can further that cooperation and we certainly hope that as a result of this report and the adoption of this report that we can push forward with this idea and bring together groups in other sectors, such as manufacturing, community services, health services and so on. In cooperation with the people concerned, again nobody wants to determine this is the group you're in it. This will be done by discussion with people so that you decide. But I must say the other part of this, and I think it must be understood is not that we call these groups together they can sit down and have a nice discussion and that we met and that was fine. The idea is that every one of those groups should have on their agenda, of course the structural questions whether there is any way forward but also whether there are strategic organising plans which they can put in place, which they can do together, or which they can do perhaps with other people outside that particular group. There are questions that perhaps where better they can coordinate industrial policy questions and collective bargaining issues.

There are some of the questions which Sallyanne touched on were joint campaigns can be run including consumer campaigns and then there's a whole range of exploiting possibilities of sharing services, of setting up joint services which has been a big item in our discussions, about training procurement, legal services, promotional material, publications and so on. And what we're saying is each of these groups should be looking at these questions and in the months to come we will be going to those groups and saying now what have you decided? What have you done? It's not one of those initiatives which will fade because we will be asking for the feedback which will be going into the report, the next report of this commission and of course those are the key issues but there are others which are touched in the report. The need to go on working on the very important work on communications which is being done.

The work of the legal framework group which has been working on various issues but where we believe it's very important as part of this future activities of congress to try to get to a situation where there are better, clearer rules, laws about trade union recognition and collective bargaining, particularly here in the Republic of Ireland. And I must say one the other key issues for us is that we want to see in all of this activity, the integration, the involvement of woman and young people. I'm old now, I was once chairman of a youth sector somewhere, many years ago. Actually most you probably weren't born when I was secretary of a youth sector. But there was one thing I ever got fed up with it was people standing on platforms saying youth is very important it's the leadership of tomorrow. I'm sorry it's not the leadership of tomorrow, it's the active membership that people who can provide leadership now and which we need, the trade union needs this, because as I've said there's being a generational change in attitudes, and unless we can overcome that very quickly we will fail. And so I think it's very important and it's been emphasised to us also in these discussions that we make sure that the woman and youth sectors of this organisation are fully integrated into the work of this Commission.

And finally, we get to the bit which I always love. When I was a delegate to conference there was nothing I loved more than a three day discussion of rules. Rules revision

conferences were the days were you could sleep for hours on end. But unfortunately sometimes you have to do it. And so what we're saying is after having looked at all these strategic objectives, after setting up processes which will tell us more about the activities that are important, then the commission has to look in great detail at the constitution and rules of the congress and of course the finances because at the end of the day it's nice having dreams and hopes but unless you have the finances to actually be able to do that work then they count for nothing. So that's another part of what this commission must look at. And then I discovered by the way what the final eleven was, when I thought there were only ten and I realised it was the bit at the end that says we will convene global meeting of trade unions centres and so on. My General Secretary Philip he sometimes had a very royal way about him and instead of saying I, we was a very easy way of saying it and so I think that's where that proposal came from. But I assure you it will be done, we're talking to the International Confederation Congress of Trade Unions.

Plans are already being made and we hope to bring together some of the leaders of other trade union centres around the world who are grappling with the same kinds of problems as here in Ireland and trying to benefit from that experience. So colleagues, I hope I've managed to explain a little bit about what's written in that report. That's what the report is about. For us, I think it's impossible to over stress the need for a sense of urgency about this. That this is an opportunity to create a better and a bigger Trade Union Movement here in Ireland, in the Republic, in Northern Ireland and that will also, it will have an impact, on other people, on other Countries, who are struggling with the same problems. You have that chance, it's sad that sometimes you have to wait until your being attacked on all sides to decide to fight your way out of the problem but that's the situation we're in and I think there is that possibility and we should seize this time to make those advances. I couldn't help but note that Jack in his presidential address this morning said this is a marathon, and it is in many ways, but I hope in the next six months some of you can come up to sprinting speed and we can move this forward. Thank you very much.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Phillip and now I want to call on John Douglas to move the emergency motion which was approved in Standing Order support No. 2 which we adopted last evening. So John.

John Douglas, Executive Council

Mr President, fellow Delegates, John Douglas proposing Emergency Motion Commission and Trade Unions on behalf of the Executive Council. The Commission's first report a Call to Action is arguably the most important report before this Conference over the last couple of days. It has evolved from a lengthy engagement with trade unions and stake holders throughout the Ireland of Ireland.

The Irish Trade Union Movement is at a crossroads. There exists only a short window of opportunity for our movement to lead social change, which will create a fairer, more equal and a better society on this island. There will be negligence of epic proportions if fail to seriously act on the first report of this Commission. Workers and their families on this island are under attack by both forces home and abroad. Thousands of our family members are being driven from the shores in search of a better life. With them goes the hope of a generation and a loss generation of the Trade Union Movement.

The Trade Union Movement needs to be fit for purpose, fit to take the fight for our class and win, fit to lead and show a path to the real alternative. Commissions Report is not all about structures or numbers of Trade Unions, if only it were so easy. It's not about words, it's about action, it's about Trade Unions working and sharing resources, it's about Trade Unions learning from our victories and mistakes, it's about putting personal agendas and egos to one side, it's about applying the scarce resources which our members give us to maximum effect, it's about workers, private and public, north and south, east and west, uniting to fight back. It's about leadership, it's about engaging with the members, giving members back their unions. It's about class politics and social solidarity. The wealthy and powerful in this country will never voluntarily give up their status or their wealth. It would have to be won back and to win it we need to recruit, to organise, and to mobilise and to fight back.

Unions can no longer work in splendid isolation, to do this is to manage our own demise. It's not about the biggest union, it's not about the smallest union, it's about winning for all workers, by sharing resources and working more closer together. My own Union Mandate for instance has 45 thousand members in the retail sector. There are nearly 200 thousand workers in the Irish retail sector and we have two organisers based in Dublin. The challenge in my union and the Trade Union Movement generally is to mobilise our 45 thousand members into 45 thousand organisers. To do this we need resources and a culture change in our own members. For too many of our own members and too many members of the Trade Union Movement generally, we need trade union membership social insurance policy. I don't blame the members for this either. The leadership the trade union movement we must give back trade unionism to the members. The members must set the agenda and the tactics. We must win back the heart and souls of our members and their families.

My union is developing strategic lines with like-minded unions across all sectors. Will it lead to amalgamations? I don't know, but if it does it will be because our members want it to. We will develop strategic strategies similar to the fair hotel's campaign in the retail sector. The next time that IKEA in Ballymun forcibly remove the two Mandate members from their premises, they will know that it's not only the two Mandate organised the removal from their premises but 800 trade union members and their families throughout Ireland. Now that's real power.

This proud trade union movement and I was listening to the Taoiseach there yesterday, this proud trade union movements of ours does not need social partnership to survive. Our destiny is in our own hands. We will regroup, we will reorganise, we will fight back and we will win. I commend this motion to Conference. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you John. Can I call on Brian Campfield to second the motion?

Brian Campfield, Executive Council

The President, Conference, Brian Campfield on behalf of the Executive Council to second the motion and I don't want to be repeating what other people have said and people have heard through various speakers through the video link and also through directly here. And you know there's a lot of talk about mission and vision and things like that and we all know in many senses that can be just jargon. We've seen it enough times in the strategic

games and objectives of the various business and public sector organisations that we engage with. But really in a sense what it means from perspective is really what we stand for. We should be clear and unambiguous that we're in favour of working people and working class communities. But that we will also be able to reach out to other sectors as well, particularly those that are suffering as results the financial and economic crisis.

Can I just say a comment I made at the meeting in March in the Unite Offices in Dublin, when we got the initial presentation. The one thing that struck me was that in various bits of trade union activity and public protests that we've been involved in the two issues that struck a cord I think, with not only with Trade Union Members but also with the community generally were the Irish Ferries dispute and the dispute over the migrant workers in terms of the GAMA dispute. And those two disputes in the trade union position in those disputes, I thought it struck a cord within society generally. It was clear and unambiguous and people in Ireland, North and South, were able to say that's what the Trade Union Movement stands for, that's the decent thing to stand for, that's something that I can support and I think there are lessons to be learnt from that.

The report makes a lot reference to structures, and they've been dealt with to some extent and while structures are important and organisation imperatives are organisation imperatives and the numbers of unions are important as well in terms of, you know if it makes sense to reduce them, you reduce them but it shouldn't be done just for the sake of doing it. But structural changes in themselves won't allow us meet the challenge that's facing us and really what it is about us is where we stand, it's about engagement with our activists, it's about knowing that we have considerable power and influence, but it's also about making sure that we exercise it and that we push the boat out as far as we can on many issues.

Its also about giving members of the Trade Union Movement, and activists in particular, some confidence, confidence that their actions can make a difference and I think you do that as well by making sure there is clarity in terms of what the policy's of the Trade Union Movement are and that really almost takes you back to the beginning of the point where I began in relation to a mission, vision whatever you call it, in terms of having a clear and unambiguous position in relation to a whole range of matters which effect our society and which effect our members and their families. I think we need to insure that we develop that, that there is a clear and unambiguous and unapologetic position taken by this Trade Union Movement, in respect of the dues that we hold and the interest that we represent, and I think this document and the work of the commission, while I think it is at an early stage, it's moderate peak in this work forward and try to ensure that we from an organisational point of view and also from a political point of view in relation to articulating our policies, that we start doing that now and there's no better time then in the midst of this particular crisis because I think it's imperative that we do that. So on behalf of the Executive Council and Conference I second the motion.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Brian. Speakers? Peter.

Peter McLoone, from the IMPACT Trade Union and a Member of Commission

And as I'm standing down from the Executive Council and the GPC at this Conference this may be my last opportunity to speak at a conference about the work of the Commission. I

think that the first thing that we have to do in the context of this discussion about mission and vision is to simplify the message and recognise that the debate is not about what is going to take place here this afternoon or what happens in the coming twelve months when we go out to talk to the members of the individual unions. To me the objective or the vision is not about how we make ourselves relevant or more relevant to members.

Our ambition, in my judgement, is how does the Trade Union Movement get a message to workers that its existence is indispensable to people's working lives? And it's not the job of members or non-members to communicate that fact that we're indispensable to the working lives, that's our job. People have to sense in the workplace that if there wasn't a Trade Union Movement, I wouldn't be secure, I wouldn't be protected, I would be more vulnerable. When I say that that's the message, because that's what caused me to join the Trade Union Movement 42 years ago when I started off my career in nursing, it was the awareness that this was something that was going to make the difference.

So I would like, in terms of the next stage of the commission, to ensure that the message that we deliver to members is simple, it's easy to understand and it's something that everybody can come together and recognise that if that's what we're trying to do we can do that best collectively and I wish the commission every success in its efforts and hopefully when we meet in 12 months' time this will have advanced a long way to where it is today. My final point is that in doing this we should of course accept that change doesn't come easily to us and there is an old phrase we used to use that culture eats strategy for breakfast. So you can have all the strategic statements that you want but unless we change that culture that instinctively is resistive of change we won't make the progress that is needed to advance the recommendations of this report. Thank you very much and before I leave rostrum as it is going to be my final contribution just to thank to my own union and all of you for the support you've given me over the years. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

And thank you too Peter. Stephen.

Stephen Fitzpatrick, CWU

Comrades, brothers and sisters - we haven't heard that too much this week so I thought I'd slip it in - I think the one thing we all agreed this week, I was trying to capture in a nutshell and basically the 'haves' have destroyed our economy so the 'have nots' have to pay and we can pack up and go home that after except we have to decide what we are going to do about it. And this week we have some very, very good motions and some very, very good strategies as to how we're going to deal with our enemies and what the visited on our people. I think the issue is how are we going to carryout those policies? Where will the resources come from? Have we got the right structures to implement the policies that we've discussed and agreed this week? And I think we all know deep in our hearts that we don't, we don't have sufficient resources or we don't have the resources sufficiently deployed in the right way to deal with the problems that we face. And we all understand why as well. And it's still shocking when you see 49 unions, we have more unions than we have counties. And whether we like it or not people come up here and talk about the Trade Union Movement but we don't really organise ourselves as a movement, we're quite disjointed. We pass motions here and if unions don't like them they'll ignore them. We'll be wasteful of the resources that we get from our members. I often use a story that when I went on the Executive Council first, it was around the time of the Laval Viking Judgements

in Europe, and I went to the Executive Council Meeting, there were 6 unions or 7 unions who had legal opinions on what those judgements meant for workers. So that means 6 Senior Councils at €10,000 plus each to give the same opinion when we probably could have got it for nothing from one of the International Unions.

So it's obvious that we're wasting our own members hard won resources and every time we do that it's one less organiser, it's one less youth conference, it's one less opportunity for us to try to convince people that we have the right message. And I think it's for those reasons SIPTU put this motion to conference 2 years ago and now we have the first report which I think we should all welcome and we should welcome it's brevity and we should welcome it's call to action. And it sets out really what our minimum steps and if we can't carry out these steps we're at nothing. And those steps recognise the difficulties that we have, it recognises the difficulties that large scale merges and amalgamations aren't popular with our own members there's a worry that people might lose their own identities and there's a worry among some of us that we might lose our jobs. But the reality is I think we know that we're here for a greater purpose than that, this provides us with a road map for closer cooperation and I think that will lead eventually to other happenings. That's my experience coming from a union made up of four different unions over a period of time that the merges and amalgamations and the clashing of the cultures make you stronger. So just to finish to say that my union will be supporting this report, we will be active in implementing this report and I call on everybody else to do the same. Thank you conference.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Stephen. Louise?

Louise O'Donnell, IMPACT

Louise O'Donnell from IMPACT welcoming the report and supporting the motion.

Delegates we believe the most important sentence in this report is on Page 7 where it says we have a strong Trade Union Movement. If we follow up on the actions in the report, well hopefully in ten, twenty and thirty years' time we will still be able to make that statement. We have membership density levels envied by many, if not most European and International Trade Unions. We have a reputation for effective negotiation and representation at national and local level. Though we need to improve, we have retained decent levels of public trust, in an era where virtually all institutions are suffering reputational damage.

Above all we enjoy a wealth of talent and determination among our official activist and staff but we need to build on this. The fact the Congress established this commission is itself an evidence of a forward looking movement ready to confront it's many challenges. And there as already been significant progress on most of the main themes in the report. Unions are working better together, exploring and taking opportunities to pool resources, campaigns and ideas and this is creating far better coordination and cooperation in areas from organising and training to economic research, campaigns and communications. Much more needs to be done in all these areas and as the report says in new spheres like legal and international work, we could be getting much more for the time and money we currently spend separately on all these activities.

IMPACT also supports the missions call to review our constitution, priorities, structures and rules. In this respect I want to welcome the establishment of the Congress Community Sector Committee. IMPACT shares the analysis of public services reforms will challenge union structures and relationships. This is already happening and it is urgent and imperative that we approach it in a way that strengthens our voice. The alternative is to strengthen the hand of management and those who want weaker unions. For this reason we endorse a specific recommendation that IMPACT and PSEU that start a conversation that could lead to amalgamation. The report is clear that better cooperation does not necessarily mean more union amalgamations, nevertheless, we have over 40 unions in a population of 6 million. In Germany there are 10 unions in a population of 80 million. We also need to address more general challenges in the areas of organisation, campaigns and communications to increase our relevance and influence. When it comes to speaking for unions in the workplace, on public platforms and in the media we must see more young people, women and ordinary workers articulating union positions on policies in a way that connects with others like them. Thank you Delegates.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Louise. Eoin?

Eoin Ronayne, Civil Public and Services Union

Colleagues, Eoin Ronayne, Civil Public and Services Union. Happy to welcome the report, to support it.

It's never been more clear to us, as Trade Unionists, that we face significant dilemmas and yes of course we need to reorganise, to renew, to reinvigorate and to stretch ourselves as representatives. The problem we have of course is we all represent political groupings with small 'p' in all of our union bodies and that is going to require a stretching of our power interests to see if we can build a better Trade Union Movement, that would better represent ordinary workers. The problem though is we talk to ourselves an awful lot but we don't talk to the people who don't know about us. And I think that's the biggest challenge facing us. Most of you here are probably members of a Trade Union because your Father, your Mother, your Sister, your Brother, it's a cultural thing that's in your family and ingrained. I know it is for me. But for many that's not the reality of today's workplace, for many we do not exist. Colleagues, my middle son going into first year brought this home to me the other day. This is one of his slogans Stand Up, Speak Up, it could be an ICTU pamphlet. This is in fact the Junior Cert Syllables for Civic, Social and Political Education. There are 186 pages in here. We do not mention at all within that syllables book, there is no reference to the Trade Union Movement, to it's history and it's future, there is no reference to our websites and this is what young students from twelve years of age through to Junior Cert will study. I asked my older son did they discuss it at CPSE when he was in first year to third year. There were no discussions about the Trade Union Movement. Yes in history, studying 1916 because in my connection with my son and the teachers understanding of what I was involved in, there was a lot of debate about our history. But we need to move beyond our proud records and our proud history. We need to move into building a Trade Union Movement that is relevant to workers where they are today and we must become part of a centre of their lives. And that's a challenge for me, as an individual that I daily take up and I've no doubt that you do it daily when you're in your company, or in the bar, or in the football field. Regularly people who have nothing to do with Trade Unions ask me about this battle, that battle, this crisis. But we need to

reach out to those who never hear that, and that is a challenge but I think we could start by trying to turn the education system into something that will strengthen our movement and our right to exist. We have a right to be discussed in the classrooms of this country. I would ask you to support the motion.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Eoin. Sheila?

Sheila Nunan, INTO

Thank you Chair. I just wanted share the opportunity, I mean Peter McClune's comments about culture eating strategy I think is probably the most relevant one. As a recently appointed General Secretary, I met a colleague very shortly afterwards and he said I bet I know what you're doing, you're having a strategic review and he said give it six months and just carry on the way you were. I think that is what is the reality of what happens because we're elected as political leaders and we don't necessarily have the capacity to drive this so called organisational change. In our own union INTO my Executive colleagues are here now so they'll know this quite well, we have a huge number of branches spread from the tiniest to the largest. So I set about a mission seeing if we could do something about the branch restructuring cause there is no point in talking about relationships with my colleagues and the other teacher unions if we don't get our own house in order a little bit. But we couldn't mention the A word, that had to go. Amalgamation couldn't be mentioned in any shape or form so came up with a new word, twinning which was they could come together for a while. But even the twinning has been greeted with absolute suspicion and I have my most assertive officials down trying to sell twinning for the last while. But the twinning is very interesting. What they didn't like was the power block, big branches in Dublin because they would dominate the business of our union. So those big branches have to change and get a bit smaller. But the small branches have said that's fine but we're not changing.

So it's just to give an illustration that it's very, very difficult and because we're constrained by our rulebook which of course requires two thirds of the majority so it's almost impossible to deliver the kind of change. So I think it's important we recognise that it's actually quite a complex job that we have and everybody here is in consensus with the need to do it. But you talk about going from, you know to the sprint position. I mean talking and walking, I think a lot more talking and walking have to be done before we get into the sprinting position because there is no doubt about it, with the challenges certainly facing education at the moment, the need is absolutely vital for the teacher unions to certainly collaborate about the provision of that essential service and I think our members back in the classrooms and in the four corners of Ireland don't really care what kind of a structure you have in Dublin and they often are mystified as to why we are repeating the same exercise across the board. So we're very enthusiastic I suppose, just to conclude and say about project but I think we need to recognise that there is a lot of support needed I think for the champions of change themselves going to need a good bit of scaffolding as to how to proceed with it because otherwise I'm really not that confident that we could come back here in two years' time if we don't track that quite clearly. Thanks.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Shiela. Mike?

Mike Jennings, The Irish Federation of University Teachers

Thank you Chairman. Mike Jennings of the Irish Federation of University Teachers. It occurs to be as the Secretary of the Union with just barely over 2,000 members and probably one of the smallest unions in Congress. Some of you might think of the expression the turkey voting for Christmas but you've probably have never witnessed the turkey speaking in favour of the report to introduce Christmas. But that's what I propose to do because even though I am the representative of one of the smallest unions and probably the sort of union that would be regarded as most vulnerable in a report which implicitly has its objective in the bringing about of twinings, amalgamations, greater cooperation and everything with a view to reducing numbers. I think that you would imagine if I was true to my members desires I might be saying hold on, stop a while and think twice, but I don't.

But I do want to say this and I think it is very very important. I do not think that it's inevitable that in the bringing together of the trade union family into closer cooperation and doing so a way that reduces the number of unions as individual organisation. I do not accept the inevitability of losing certain attributes. I do not accept the inevitability of a distancing of the loyalty lines from the members. I do not accept the inevitability of losing the sense of identification that the members have and I certainly do not accept the inevitability because if I did I would be vehemently opposed to the idea. I do not accept the inevitability of the loss of specialisation that is essential, an essential part of what members require from certain Trade Unions. What I do believe that where it's not inevitable I think that it requires an open-eyed approach to the thing and I think as we move forward to try to cooperation together it is incumbent upon us to listen to the reservations and not to dismiss them as people who are naysayers or who are negatives but to try to get down to understand what the message is being said. Because if we can assimilate that message into our project we can truly have the best of both worlds. We can have the sort of loyalty and identification and specialisation that goes with small unions, combined with the efficiency and the shared benefits of the solidarity of a Trade Union family of 800 thousand people. And speaking as the General Secretary of one of the four teacher unions in the Republic of Ireland, who have come together very very closely and are working very very well together. I see my ambition as not only greater cooperation within the Republic of Ireland but I say why not look out to our Brothers and Sister in Northern Ireland and see how much more we can do. We can do it. I'm not going to do Barack Obama's Irish language thing but you know what I'm talking about. We can do it, but we do it best if we do it with our eyes open, bring our members with us, it requires us to listen and not to dismiss. Thank you very much.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Mike. Joe?

Joe Cunningham, SIPTU

Delegates Joe Cunningham, SIPTU. It's not something I often do at Conference, come up and address Conference. But I have to say I moved to speak on this particular situation.

The document, which is in everybody's pack, is a very very critically important document, as far as I'm concerned, for a number of reasons. One it resisted the normal temptation for the Trade Union Movement to produce something that was 200 pages long. Brilliant, brilliant idea and for those of you who decided that excellent, really, really important. I

was going to say a few words about some of the things that this document points to in terms of groups of unions coming together but the two previous speakers dealt with that very well as far as I'm concerned so there's no need for me to mention that. So what I'd like to do is touch briefly on the strategic organising group.

Phillip in his presentation spoke about a theoretical debate that exists sometimes as to whether a union is a servicing union or a organising union. I think there is a simple answer. If the percentage of activists that we have in the Trade Union Movement is 5%, that's definitely a servicing union. Whether we like it or not, that's the reality of it and I'd ask each and every one of you in the room to consider this. You as the activists, would your situation dramatically improve in your workplace if we could bring that percentage of activists up to 40 or 50% and I suspect the simple answer to that is absolutely, absolutely it would. And how do we go about that?

Well the first thing we're going to have to learn to do as a movement because we're brilliant at speaking. Most of the people who populate the Trade Union Movement can speak really, really well. Listening is a different matter altogether. Making contact with members, finding out what their issues are and organising around that is what we should be engaged in and strategically identifying areas where we should be organising. If we can effect that kind of change for this movement we would dramatically change the statistics on that board from 5% activism to considerably more than that. And will dramatically improve our density levels as well but I'll tell you this, unless each of you in this hall take this document out and read it and the one simple request I have of you because one of the tests we have for identifying whether we can have leaders in the workplace is this. Set a simple task and see how people get on. My simple task to everybody in this hall today is look at this document and when you go back to your respective union, ask your union what are they doing to ensure that we deliver on what's contained in this document. Thank you Delegates.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Joe. Sorry David?

David Connolly, SIPTU

David Connolly, SIPTU Delegate and Representative of Community Sector of the NEC. I think this is a very, very important initiative that's been undertaken here and first I want to acknowledge the commitment and the progress made by the commission members and particularly welcome the specific inclusion and naming of the Community Sector in the report and also the recent establishment of the new ICTU Committee for the community sector which was driven by the unions connect together Unite, Impact and SIPTU. This is important progress for a sector with 50 thousand workers of which now almost 15 thousand are organised. The commission states that their consultations came up with the first range of interesting ideas which I wish to focus on. These were first reinvigorating activism of branch and local level, enhancing the work of women, youth and immigrant groups and reaching out to community and political groups. From this perspective key challenges to action that I can identify are first the strategy needs to capture the dynamics of these diverse ideas and organisations.

Second, it needs to provide a coherent framework to enable strong connections to develop and third it needs to reflect the extreme urgency and vital requirement to commence this

external engagement, both in the interests of the future growth of the movement and for the community and groups identified. Now more than ever in the current crisis the Trade Union Movement is the last line of defence for the poorer working class communities in urban and rural areas across the Island and the local workers employed in thousands of community based essential services that responding to the most severe social problems of concentrated poverty, hardship and low income at a local level. They need to know that behind them, in their struggle is the union movement. These communities and services have been selected as the easy targets of Government austerity measures for cuts and closure in order to protect other vested interests. Resisting these attacks, these communities need to know that behind them stand the unions. Now is the time to ensure that the Trade Union Movement through Congress, the individual trade unions and the local trades councils is seen as immediately relevant to these vulnerable communities the residents and the workers who serve them. By progressing the work begun with commission we can collectively demonstrate the movement is fully capable of filling the President's leadership vacuum by bringing about the fundamental changes, consolidations and restructuring required in the face of a sustained global and local attack on organised workers and the communities. However, we need to quickly determine how to best to achieve this. This will then enable us to convincingly defend, mobilise and protect Ireland's most vulnerable communities at their hour of gracious need. I would suggest that we keep this issue on the agenda, this aspect of the report on the agenda and the necessary work of change commenced by the Commission must be continued as an urgent priority by each of the member unions of Congress in order to forge the potential connections identified in the report. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you David. Now Eugene.

Eugene McGlone, UNITE

It's important to note that we've had eight speakers on this motion and absolutely no one has opposed it. Nobody has been paying attention to what Michael Sharp said earlier or yesterday about opposing motions. But the important things to think of have already been said but I want to add a couple of points that might be of interest.

I think the first thing to note is that in your acceptance speech two years ago President you pointed this motion out as being one of two most important things that we did in Tralee. When I think of the level of debate and the interest shown has proven you right and correct and right in that and in some people's minds perhaps the motion that you moved from SIPTU went unnoticed but it's quite clear that it has caught the imagination in a significant way and it's probably done so because of the bullying tactics of Philip and Philip to make sure that we got our work done in time. But the important thing that this document before us has in I think in difference to the documents done in 1974 and the work done in the 60's is this one put strategy before structure. Previously what we did was we attempted to look at the structures that we had in place and batter our strategy into that structure and it didn't work. We didn't reduce the number of trade unions from 1974's level of ninety down to the 49 by virtue of battering down. It's because of societal changes by and large, along with a lot of pragmatic thinking but we have now put a strategy in place and the strategy will determine the structures that we need to make that work and that's what the document says, that's why the document is in 200 pages of great ideas, like what we all had.

The most important thing to say about the document and it's been mentioned already, is that the document is not about mergers because I think as a previous Regional Secretary of mine would have said, you would have only 2 unions, one for everybody and one for everybody else and that's not what it's about. It is about attempting to create space for the structures that we made and that's what we're going with it. And perhaps the final point I want to make to everyone in the hall is that this is the one opportunity that everyone here is going to get to shape the Trade Union Movement for the next and the generation after that again. It doesn't come around too often. It's quite a substantial period of time since 1974. It didn't really change the structure in any great significant way. It tinkered with it but it did not manage to change what we needed to happen to change the Trade Union Structure that we need for our current day. So what we have got now is this opportunity to do this and I don't think that anybody who has engaged at any level with the Commission would say that it has not been a worthwhile exercise. It has been an exercise which has tested our thinking, it has been an exercise that has tested our commitment, probably more importantly, and it's been an exercise that hopefully will fulfil what Joe Cunningham was talking about, changing words into action. So Chair, Conference I support the Motion.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Eugene. Any further speakers?

Brian Forbes, MANDATE

Comrades, Brothers and Sisters Brian Forbes on behalf of MANDATE supporting the Commission Report. Mandate welcomes the report in its entirety and you hear the General Secretary John Douglas outlining the reasons for doing so when he moved the report. Mandate remains ready, willing and able to begin the process of working together with our Comrades in the CWU and IBOA immediately to effect real and dramatic change in our sector.

One point I would make President in relation to the Commission Report is in relation to the strategic organising group, which Joe mentioned. We think it is essential that the group which is self-electing be comprised of individuals with experience and a proven track record of organising and recruiting workers and in that respect I would ask Conference to support the Commission's Report. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Brian. Now were there any other speakers offering? No further speakers? I'm going to put the emergency motion to the floor. All those in favour please show. All those against. Abstentions. I declare the motion carried and I believe it to be the most important motion that we will deal with this week, because Delegates we spend a great deal of time at our conferences discussing how much better the world would be if it was different, and not sufficient time discussing how to get there and we need to whip ourselves to get there because otherwise it's like going to war without an air force.

I want now to move in accordance with the earlier decision on foot of the recommendation of the chair of standing orders. To deal with the motions which are outstanding from last evening and in that context to deal with the relevant sections of the Principal Report which are Section 5 on Congress Organisation, Chapters 1 on Membership, Finance and

Structures, Chapter 4 on the Trades Councils, the Congress Centres and Labour Relations Systems, Chapter 6 on Youth Connect, Union Connect and Fair Hotels, Chapter 7 on Congress Education and Training, Chapter 8 on Campaigns and Communications, Chapter 9 on the Report on the BBC of 2009 and Appendix 1 Accounts we've deal with accounts, the Executive Council, the General Purposes Committee, Northern Ireland Committee Appendix 3 The Affiliated Membership, Appendix 4 The Congress Secretariat, Appendix 5 The Members of Congress, Committees and External Bodies and Appendix 6 Actions on Motions to BBC 2009. This session is a private session so accordingly I have to ask those in the hall who are not accredited delegates to leave us for a while until we deal with Motion 3, Motion 4 and the Amendment to Motion 4 and deal with those outstanding sections of the report. So I just want to allow observers to leave the hall. Philip are you leaving permanently or just for this evening? Your still here, okay and while the observers are leaving the hall can I ask the mover of Motion No. 3 from the ASTI to be ready to move the motion?

Brendan Broderick, ASTI

Mr President, Delegates, my name is Brendan Broderick and moving this Motion, Motion 3 on behalf of the ASTI.

This Motion is not about journalists. I want to say that from the outset. Rather it is about media ownership and the diversity of media ownership. In the West media concentration is increasing each year leading to a growing concern for the impact on media quality, media pluralism and media diversity. Generally speaking the media tend to reflect and support the existing order. Most European democracies, alternating right wing and left wing Government is the norm but in Ireland the norm is right wing alternating with right wing. As a result the media here have always attempted to legitimise capitalism and in latter years that means justifying an unfettered neoliberal agenda. It is characterised by a complete lack of ideological pluralism resulting in a complete lack of freedom of choice for the reader. Yes we do have the token article by a left wing commentator to give the illusion of objectivity but the truth is we are operating a very hostile climate of unrestrained attempts by the right to diminish the power of unions to represent our members or to articulate a viable alternative to the austerity policies of success of governments. At the onset of the crisis, the ICTU formulated a coherent response that was rejected and continues to be rejected by the political and business elites and the media continued to facilitate that rejection. Some even go so far as to question the relevance and even the need for trade unions. Whether we like it or not the media play a very important role in society, even those who are sceptical or cynical towards the media rely on it for information. Every trade union in the country publishes periodicals and newsletters on a regular basis but the brutal truth is that most are ignored and go unread by our members. Instead most people are informed and influenced by what they read in newspapers and it is the newspapers who set the agenda for radio and TV. So whoever controls the newspapers controls the political and social agenda. The only effective way for us to break that cycle is to publish our own commercial newspaper.

Now to the question of feasibility, can we afford to publish a weekly newspaper? I believe the economic crisis and the response of the establishment has created a huge gap in the market. Most of our members and the 420 thousand unemployed together with many non-union workers, pensioners and students have taken a hammering and there is a lot more pain in the pipeline. Many realise that there is no counter to the right wing

consensus that presents itself on our newsstands every day and the absence a counter has left some believing that there is no alternative view. For example some have swallowed the line that is forever being peddled that we are all to blame for the economic collapse. All members need something overt to verbalise their concerns and agenda, to give them hope and to make them proud of their trade union affiliation. And the most effective way, perhaps the only way to achieve this is via a commercial newspaper. In fact, in my opinion, the only way Congress can progress it's Better Fair Way agenda, or to give effect to aspirations in its documents a Call to Action is through the publication of its own national commercial newspaper. And I could say the same for all the Motions that will be passed at this convention. We should not underestimate the anger that is bubbling under the surface out there. A lot of it is displaced anger being stirred up by vested interests and it is being directed at us the Trade Union Leadership. So the question is not can we afford to publish but rather can we afford not to publish.

To conclude I believe the ICTU have the means, the expertise and the wherewithal to pull this off, if the will is there to do it. For example Trade Unions are expert at organising, therefore with over 800,000 members nationwide, surely we could organise so that distribution costs would be minimum? Also the business section could be catered for by the new economic research units. James Larkin established the newspaper as a pro labour alternative to what was then the right wing consensus press in 1911 and against all the odds he kept it going for five years. In 2011 we can emulate that if the will is there to do it. I believe that passing this Motion would send out a clear message that Trade Union Movement is determined to be proactive in a meaningful way on behalf of its members and that passing this Motion will resonate in a positive way with me.

Finally, I want to say, and I'm going off script here because I don't know exactly, this is my first time to come to a Convention, I'm not sure how things work. There may be a Motion to put this back to some subcommittee or something. I'm against that and the reason I'm against that is because I don't believe in kicking the can down the road. Our members want action, there're fed up with words, there're fed up talking to ourselves and this will be an action just like the last motion that we accepted going forward.

Jack O'Connor, President

I'll have to ask you to conclude Delegate.

Brendan Broderick, INTO

Well alright. I don't expect Congress, if this Motion is passed to publish a newspaper next Sunday or next month. We're looking at three or four months down the line and I don't expect Thanks for listening.

Jack O'Connor, President

I'll have to ask you to conclude. Delegate please. Thank you Delegate. Now is there a seconder?

Ann Pickett, ASTI

President, Delegates within my time constraints there are at least five reasons to support this Motion.

In no particular order No. 5- in 1904 when the Independent Newspaper was produced, Larkin referred to its founder William Larkin Murphy as a capitalist vampire. Nothing has changed. There is absolute dominance in Irish print by those who are involved in several businesses.

No. 4 - control means the interests of the wealthy are promoted by propaganda in right wing media publications which ignore the massive profits of the rich and focus on the denigration of the workers and the attack on the public service.

Reason No. 3 - the newspaper won't embody trash, so don't expect any lewd or overexposed photographs on page 3.

Reason No. 2 - examples of diametric opposition to trade unionism are quotations which I found in Irish newspapers. Teachers voted for crippling strike, airport strike threats betray the country, Unions hold country to ransom and the most interesting one, employer representatives says unions are lunatics and number one you don't have to be CEO of Heinz to produce a paper which is full of beans. And also we won't have to refer to the editorial officer as Sir. We need to promote an equal society and promote trade unions. This can be achieved through Congress published commercial newspaper on a regular basis. However this is to be accomplished and whenever it will happen and however costs will be covered, perhaps through advertising, the support of union members or we could even raise a cartoon fund. This is a necessity. It's time to stop the attack on workers and their employment conditions in both the public and the private sectors. The print media is a powerful machine and must be embraced by all unions. Delegates vote for this Motion. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Ann.

Now I'm going to take the debate on this Motion because there is a considerable distinction between this Motion and the subject matter of Motion 4. So speakers on Motion 3 please? Speakers.

David Martin, Delegate ASTI

Can I just point out the very obvious financial benefit? We're talking about fundraising, but there is a potential circulation figure of 800 thousand workers to this publication. I know it would be a very easy way of adding to the income strain that we are looking forward so it's a very practical way of addressing that issue. Please support the Motion.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Delegate. Gerry?

Gerry Hourihan, National Union of Journalists

President, Conference Gerry Hourihan, from the National Union of Journalists proposing remission of this motion to the Executive.

Perception is everything when it comes to the media, in that regard the newspapers reputation is everything. And that reputation is based on three things; the depth of content, the clarity of content and the timeliness of content. That involves a minimum of 35

to 40 staff to produce a weekly commercial newspaper regardless of its political slant. The problem with this motion is that it seems to be a definitive decision without any idea or mention of logistics or what we would be committing ourselves to financially. There are no figures or numbers attached. There is no idea of editorial control or editorial independence, there's no idea as to the cost of offices, ICT, insurance, printing, distribution or staffing or legal costs. There is no business plan. Thanks to my union the forty journalists it would take to produce this paper won't come cheap. So who will fund this newspaper for the five to ten years that it would take to establish it and create a profitable market presence. The Irish Daily Mail funded by its English counterparts has given itself eleven years to make a profit. It's year five or six, it still hasn't. They have deep pockets, we don't. By the time a newspaper could become, or might become viable in any commercial sense, and it is a commercial paper that is proposed. Newspapers themselves would be less important, if viable at all, except as a web presence. However as a union of journalists we would of course welcome an examination of any matter that would improve communication. Why not a community radio licence? Why not using social media, those magnificent animations we saw yesterday or today. Why aren't they on Facebook in a viral capacity in a advertorial capacity? In one day they could reach more people and have more communication effect than reams and reams and reams of paper. What we don't want is a newspaper that's found under the stairs at Liberty Hall or in the boots of official's cars. Deadwood going to waste. The NUJ know well how difficult the newspaper business is. Our unemployed members know this better than anyone else. Congress needs to know and needs to be clear what it is committing itself to and for that reason the NUJ is proposing remission to the NEC of this Motion. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Gerry. Brian. Sorry Brendan were you ... ?

Frank Connolly, SIPTU

Chair, Delegates for the past three years there has been a veritable tsunami of abuse heaped on the Trade Union Movement as those who caused the economic and banking collapse sought to place working people at the scene of that historic crime. Public services workers and their unions have been demonised and their paying conditions attacked. In an assault that was of course always intended as a concerted effort to drive down wages across the economy, both in the public and private sector.

None of this could have happened or been possible without a compliant media, through which a populist campaign was launched to soften the public to accept this vicious wage cutting agenda and of course the wider attack on those who depend on public services and social welfare. The voices of those who argued for an alternative and workable way out of this crisis were largely drowned by the noise emanating from the powerful interests seeking to place the burden of this collapse on those who can least afford it.

An example recited this morning, for instance, of the McCarthy Report and in speeches yesterday. It went completely unreported across the mass media, at least to what I saw. That there were elements on the McCarthy Report on privatisation that were factually wrong, the figures were wrong, the statistics were wrong, the analysis was incorrect in respect of a number of the semi state agencies it examined. There wasn't a word about that across the wider media. This proposal offers an opportunity in my view to progress or to redress this imbalance, to connect more directly with our members and to the wider

public. Perhaps even to influence the reporting of the main stream media by putting out factually based analysis, progressive opinion and honest journalism. It is not a panacea by any means, indeed in a world where newspapers are folding by the month, where sales and advertising revenues are falling, it is a formidable challenge. Yet 65% of people, including our members, read a weekly newspaper. Notwithstanding the significant growth of the new technologies that have been referred to earlier, the internet, the social media and the continuing importance of television and radio. The Communications Group of Congress are examining all of those options for the movement. A newspaper of course will not make money, it is not a commercial venture in the sense that it will be based on shareholders, profits, aspirations. It will cost, let's face it, a lot of money. Gerry is right in that respect. Perhaps €2 million a year but in my view it could play a vital role in the necessary reorganisation of the Trade Union and wider social movement and engage in the crucial battle of ideas. To defeat this Motion would be a serious mistake, colleagues because doing nothing is not an option at this point. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

Now Brian.

Brian Forbes, MANDATE

Comrades, Brothers and Sisters, Brian Forbes on behalf of MANDATE to second remission.

We are not opposed to this Motion and whilst entirely laudable, the timing and the possible subsequent consequences of passing this Motion must be viewed in the wider context of communications across the movement. The Communications Group which Frank has just mentioned which was established by Congress, is engaged under the Executive Council of Congress in a comprehensive and strategic overview of communications and many of the key experts from the movement in the field of communications are involved in that process.

Passing this Motion today may restrict the capabilities of that strategic and important group to actively gauge the demand for and the economic consequences of a weekly newspaper. In seeking remission, we are not seeking to defer the aims and objectives of the Motion, rather we want to give Congress and the Communications Subgroup the opportunity to take a holistic and comprehensive overview of communications which quite possibly, at some stage in the future, may involve the emergence of a weekly commercial newspaper, demand and finances permitting. The potential for job creation is recognised in the Motion but the need is for us to ensure our communications strategy has the potential for real and effective change led by demand and sustainability. Conference we have just adapted the commission's report to promote strategic actions and thinking things through. I ask Conference to support remission. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Brian. Seamus?

Seamus Dooley, President, National Union and Journalist

Speaking to Motion 3 and also making reference to the campaigns and communicational section of the report.

First of all I wanted to say that last Friday the National Union of Journalists officials condemned in vigorous terms the coverage by sections of the British media coverage of the public service's dispute.

The National Union of Journalists in Ireland has hosted a series of seminars on reporting the recession where we have examined failures, where there have been failures on the part of some media organisations. But sometimes the debate around media is simplistic and it begins with the failure to acknowledge one thing and one thing alone and that is that media is actually plural. And when your talking about a media organisation name the media organisation and when your talking about media it is important for instance to distinguish between commentators and reportage.

I agree with Frank Connolly and I think that many media organisations have failed abysmally to provide a variety of voices and that's why the NUJ has had its policy. The establishment of a media commission in Ireland, which will examine issues of my Government of media ownership and control. It is not just about newspapers, it is also about cross ownership and it is about those who control and who have access to the radio stations, to cross ownership, Denis O'Brien being a perfect example. We in the NUJ did not take a stand between O'Reilly and O'Brien because quite frankly I regard it as a pissing match between two people, both of whom want to screw the workers. They merely want to do it in different ways. But we drew the line. We drew the line when they saw to influence coverage at the Moriarty Tribunal.

But I want to sound this note of caution. It is comfortable for the Trade Union Movement. This will be familiar music to my colleagues on the Executive, to blame the media alone. I support this Motion but I support remission for the reasons that have been outlined. But the work of the Communications Group within Congress is to look, to develop a strategy in a long term way which enables us to embrace all of the opportunities but it also poses us with a great challenge and that is to get our own act together because sometimes when you find a scapegoat you can ignore your own faults. And too frequently, in commentary on media movement, the Trade Union Movement, like politicians and like the church forget to say maybe we also are not always getting in right. So with the greatest of humility and that's not usual for me or journalists, I'm suggesting that what we should do is remit this Motion, embrace all of the strategies but also grab by the scruff of the neck our own communications strategies and stop scoring own goals. Thank you President.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Seamus. Bernard?

Bernard Harbor IMPACT

Thanks President. My name is Bernard Harbor from IMPACT. We're also supporting the remission of this Motion. Not because we're necessarily against the idea of a weekly newspaper but we believe, like some of the other speakers, that there needs to be clarity about where that fits into the Congress Communications Strategy.

Brian from MANDATE mentioned that the ICTU Communications Committee has been looking at a range of different media, many more media available to us now that has been in the past. Prints, web, digital, radio, social media, face to face and so on and I think that the suggestion in the proposed Motion needs to be looked at in the context of all

of these. It's not about kicking the idea into touch but it's about making sure that we consider all the options together and also that we consider the benefits and the costs which are considerable in the print area before we commit ourselves to decisions that will take a lot of resources and take a lot of money from the affiliates and from Congress.

And finally I'd make the point that even if we do have a weekly newspaper at some time in the future, that is not going to take away from us the job of dealing with the mass media and trying to get our message across in the mass print media, the TV and the radio because regardless of what we produce they will still be producing publications. So let's not kid ourselves into thinking that this is a silver bullet that will do away with our problem with the mass media.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thanks Bernard. Now are there any other speakers offering? Point of Order. I'll take a Point of Order.

Brendan Broderick, ASTI

I take it that you're going to motion to remit first so have I the right to reply before that?

Jack O'Connor, President

You have right of reply.

Brendan Broderick, ASTI

The previous debate we had here this afternoon was on this document A Call to Action. I believe if we take the motion to remit it's a Call for Inaction and it is kicking the can down the road and we all know what's going to happen if it's remitted. That's going to be the end of it. Our members the reason it has been a commercial newspaper as I said before is because people don't read our stuff. People when they go in on a Sunday morning to buy a newspaper, they want to be informed and entertained in equal measure. The one thing they don't want is to be ignored and as Trade Unionists our concerns and our agenda have been ignored for far too long. This is our chance to get our case out in the open. Now the movers of this Motion which I was trying to say earlier don't expect if the Motion is carried to Congress to issue a newspaper next Sunday or next month. This would take three to four months to get going and again it would probably be a very humble publication initially, probably maybe a tabloid form only 16 pages or whatever, something like Herald AM that they have in Dublin that they hand out free to people and it's just running advertising income alone. So I think we can do this, as I say if the will is there. And if it is a success then it will grow and grow and grow into something bigger and better and if it's a failure, it's a failure, at least we will have tried. So I urge you to reject the Motion to remit and to accept the Motion. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Delegate. Now there is a proposal to remit before the floor so I'm going to put that to the floor. In view of the fact that the union concerned is not accepting. All those in favour of remission please show. All those against. Motion is remitted. Thanks Delegates.

Now I want to call now on the mover of Motion No. 4 from the Galway Council of Trade Unions and also to call on Dundalk Trades Council to move the Amendment.

Helen Cousins, Galway Trade Council

Helen Cousins, Galway Trade Council proposing Motion 4.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Helen.

Helen Cousins, Galway Trade Council

Sorry do I keep going now or do I step down for the Amendment part?

Jack O'Connor, President

No. Are you going to move now? Well speak go ahead Helen.

Helen Cousins, Galway Trade Council

Due to changing bank practices for small businesses as a result of the national economic crisis and combined the changes to force grant payment cycles, several of our board of management members have been compelled to give personal guarantees to facilitate the Galway Congress Centre's overdraft facility. The overdraft facility is essential to the day to day running of the centre, which due to the lack of reserves could not continue to operate without it. Without these guarantees the centre would almost certainly be forced to close. As Board Members we felt obliged to keep this centre open, our staff employed and our clients serviced at a time when facilities, services and the work of the centre is needed more than ever. This is not just an issue for the Galway Centre, other Congress Centres are under the same types of pressure. While Congress has recognised that there are issues for the Board of Management of Congress Centres and after the rebranding exercise of a few years ago you were giving undertakings and promises of support, training and help. Congress has yet to deliver on this promise. The situation should never arise where ordinary board members acting for congress at local level could be effectively compelled to become guarantors for the finances of the Congress Centre. At least one General Secretary of the ICTU affiliations Union has told his local activist board member not to give such a guarantee and to withdraw from the Board. Should other unions adopt this approach the centre would not continue to function. Therefore we are asking the executive council to take this matter on board and protect ordinary union members acting on behalf of ICTU on at local level. Please support this motion.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Delegate. Is there a seconder? Formally seconded. Formally seconded. Thanks Pat. Now the mover of the Amendment from Dundalk Trades Council.

Frank O'Brien, Dundalk Council of Trade Unions.

Thank you President. Frank O'Brien from the Dundalk Council of Trade Unions. I am formally withdrawing the amendment to the motion.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Delegate. Is there a seconder for the amendment. Oh sorry my apologies. How many errors have I made today? Trying to do two things at once. So the motion is before the floor. Are there any speakers on the motion? So I'm going to invite Sallyann Kinehan, Assistant General Secretary to respond.

Sallyanne Kinahan, Assistant General Secretary, ICTU

Thank you President, Delegates. Maybe just at the outset to acknowledge the contribution that has been made across the country by members of the Trade Union Movement to the running of the Congress Centres network and to the individual Congress Centres and clearly a couple of years ago the focus of the Congress Centres network shifted towards dealing with the huge challenge of up skilling because of the fact that we had a labour market where we with almost full employment and very dramatically in the last couple of years the role of remit has changed towards providing once again the service for which they were founded supporting people who are facing unemployment and I really do want to acknowledge the contribution this made to communities and to the Trade Union Movement by the Congress Centres and I completely understand the sentiment of the motion that is before the floor today in looking at the burden that is placed on any individual that takes on the responsibility for being a Company Director but particularly when the purpose of the company is a social one. But I also need to explain the story from a Congress perspective while appreciating that the sentiment that the organisation of Congress is not in a position to indemnify members of individual Congress Centre's networks who take on that role and is basically because we do not have the resources to do so and maybe if I could give you an example of the situation that we find ourselves in organisationally.

In terms of our own legal personality we are not a company so we do not have the cover if you like of the kind of guarantee of limited liability that comes with a company status and we're not a company because it is the desire of the Executive Council not to be a company. So in terms of our legal personality we don't have that kind of back drop of cover if you like that if we were to further indemnify anybody that we ourselves would be protected. Because we do not have the kind of company cover quite recently when we were undertaking to write an analysis of the health system we found ourselves in the situation where we had to look at our own liabilities in terms of what was the content of the publication and in order to issue a publication we had to take out an insurance bond and in fact the cost of that insurance bond was prohibited for the organisation. So just presenting this as an example of the limitations that are placed on our organisation because of our own structure and indeed because of the financial constraints of the organisation. So unfortunately whilst depreciating what's behind this motion the organisation is just not placed to fulfil it. Thank you Delegates.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Sallyanne. Does the mover want to reply?

Helen Cousins, Galway Trades Council

Thank you very much Sallyanne. I appreciate your predicament and I hope you appreciate mine. Just to say we will accept referral back on the basis that it is looked at and addressed. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

So perhaps somebody would formally remove remission? Thank you Delegates. So the Galway Council of Trade Unions accepts remission. Is it agreeable to remit? All in favour of remission please show. All against. Abstentions. Motion is remitted.

And now Delegates we're actually once again ahead of our time, so to speak and we're returning to public session so I just want to allow observers who are queuing outside a chance to get back in. It's been pointed out to me that I omitted to deal with some outstanding sections of the report. Section 5, Chapter, one, four, six, seven, eight, nine, Appendix one, Appendix two, Appendix three, Appendix Four, Appendix five and Appendix six. We still have five minutes if anyone wishes to speak on them? Sorry I thought Gerry was going to speak. No speakers offering? Sorry Frank is.

So Delegates there are no further speakers so I'm going to put the adoption of those sections of the report to Conference, all in favour. All against. Abstentions. So those sections of the report are adopted. Thanks Delegates.

And now we're going to move to deal with the business scheduled for this afternoon. We're going to be dealing with Section Two of the Principle Report, Chapter One the Aftermath of Partnership, Chapter Two Better Leave Schemes, Chapter Three A Safer Workplace, Chapter Four Union Rights and Human Rights, Section Five, Chapter Two Public Sector, Semi States and Construction Committees and Appendix Seven The Disputes Committee Report No. 901.

I don't know if John Mathews is in the hall? Meanwhile maybe the movers of Motions 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20 would be ready to move?

Are you ready to speak John? So I want now to invite John Mathews from the Congress Networks Centres to address Conference. John is associated with the Dundalk People's Centre for information and training. He started on community employment on the 19 April 1993. He became Assistant Manager there in October of '93. He was the Welfare Rights Coordinator for nine years. He became Manager of the centre in April 2002. He's been Vice Chair of the Congress Centre's Network since 2009 and since taking over as Manager staff at the centre have increased from 22 to up to 70. 17 are our own paid staff due to the setting up of a crèche as non for profit organisation. The Centre Board are all members of Dundalk Trades Council shared by Frank O'Brien and all staff are members of Trade Unions, either Unite or SIPTU. So I want to invite John to address Conference and you're very welcome John.

John Mathews, Congress Networks Centres

Chair, Conference and Delegates I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to talk about the Congress and the Centres Network. The network was set up in 1985 by ICTU, by the Youth Employment Committee and FAS. This was to identify a response to the mass unemployment in the 1980's. The network now has 24 centres both North and South.

The main function was to be the voice for unemployed, low paid and socially excluded. I want to thank the Trades Council, members of the local new communities. Only for their dedication and support on a voluntary basis the centres wouldn't be where they are now. In that time Fas introduced schemes which are now call Community Employment Schemes. This enabled unemployed people to work and train 19.5 hours a week and receive a top up on their social welfare payment. ICTU and the local Trades Councils seen the gap in the system where people afraid to go down and apply for their entitlements, simply because forms were not user friendly and they had a fear if they said the wrong thing, they would lose something they already had. So selected staff were trained in all the

centres on the information and rights and entitlements to everybody and this is now a very successful service with the network. We have evolved and grown offer additional services under one roof, in other words a one stop shop. We have now job initiative schemes, job clubs where we can help people to compile their CV's, give tips on interview skills, we can represent people on all appeals, deliver training. Some of the centres have now set up what we call a second-hand school book shop where because of the environment that we're in now people just can't afford to be buying new books.

Our Longford Centre has had what they called a revamp. They now take second-hand furniture, do them up as new and sell them off at a reasonable price. We also can provide affordable childcare for people that maybe they're working part-time, maybe they're doing new training so we can actually help them out there. We also provide rooms for the unions at local level for meetings or for training. The Congress Centres Network Centres Network in 2006 saw that the only way to move was to become a FETAC Quality Assured Service, where we can deliver training to both employed and unemployed in a professional and relaxed manner to suit the needs of the people. To date 19 centres can deliver certified training or can rent the rooms out to the unions at a reasonable rate. We would deal with over 500 thousand people per year and if you count all our staff between all of the centres we have up on 700, which is a great achievement. The continued professional development of the staff has been our key. Priority over the past three years in training both staff and both the management with a combination of summer schools, European projects and actually hosting European groups, sharing each other's knowledge and best practice. This has brought improvement to the services throughout the network. More importantly we have come to appreciate the great service we do provide. The delivery has a knock-on effect on staff, as through their training a high percentage of centre staff move onto into real jobs and each staff member joins a union in that process. We now call on each of the unions to support and make use of the services and promote the centres to their members and their families. We need to improve our collaboration and ensure of the grass roots of the union movement are promoted and nurtured within the communities. There was a total of 32 centres. Currently we are down now at 24 centres because that was lack of funding. Some of them just couldn't pay their rent or insurance. So we call on the unions today for their support so we don't lose any more of the centres. We actually have a brochure we have it out on our stand and it tells you the location of all the centres and all of the services that we do provide. So I would like to thank you for the opportunity to tell you that, about the centres and beware we will be coming cap in hand. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you very much John. We note you will be coming cap in hand. You weren't here for the discussion on the finances yesterday evening, obviously. But we admire your perseverance and enthusiasm and every good wish to you on your work, very important work on the Congress Centres Network and of course we will be endeavouring to do everything we can to assist with that work. And now I want to call on Mandate to move Motion No. 16.

Joan Gaffney, MANDATE

Joan Gaffney on behalf of MANDATE Trade Union moving Motion 16.

It is clear that Ireland finds itself in the midst of the greatest economic crisis since the foundation of the State. A crisis caused by a culture of greed and promoted by reckless finance institutions and a few powerful interest groups. Thousands of our fellow citizens are angry, but they're also fearful what their future holds. Our Government, the EU and the IMF tells us we have no choice. People are being bullied into believing there is no alternative. Mandate welcomes Trade Union Commission document aptly titled a Call to Action. 800 thousand members on the Island deserves real, motivated trade union leadership. The challenge for unions today is to build strength through membership density. Mandate realise the need to immediately begin the process of cooperative working with other like-minded unions in order to effectively create the environment of successful, organising and recruitment campaigns. We need to pool our talents, our resources to achieve victory and develop joint up thinking between unions on organising and campaigning. Those campaigns to include, when appropriate development of leverage strategies such as the Fair Hotels initiative. Mandate stands ready to face the challenge of close working with other unions in order to make our movement strong and to once again fight to mobilise workers and their families for a social, economic and political change. I put this motion to Conference and ask for your support. Thank you.

Patricia King, Vice President

Thank you Delegates. Have we a seconder? Formally seconded. Are there any other speakers to that Motion?

Margaret McKee, Unison

President, Congress Margaret McKee supporting Motion 16.

Thatcher saw trade unionism as an obstacle to the rich making even more profits so that they could join the ranks of the super-rich. She was right, we are an obstacle, an obstacle who fed of those who make their profit on the backs of our members and long may we be so. The only real question is how we can be even more of an obstacle. This Motion proposes an obvious solution that we all need to sign up to. We need to convince another million or so workers on this Island to join us to make change. Doing it together, instead of in competition is a tough challenge for all of us, but it's stable. When we put our minds to do it, we can do extraordinary things together. Look at some of our international achievements. When we decided to increase our support to Cuba we filled two ships with buses, ambulances, computers and even a train and delivered them through the US blockade. With imagination and determination like that we're surely capable of convincing and protecting vulnerable workers at home. We can take on the union-busters, we have both industrial and economic power. We have spending power, we have investment power through our funds and pensions schemes. We are the major tax payers. We need to start throwing that weight behind the unionisation of workers and forcing of our right to bargain collectively on the whole of this Island and I call on the Conference to support it.

Patricia King, Vice President

Thank you speaker. Now are there any other speakers to Motion No. 16? Alright we'll move on then to Motion No. 17 and it's in the name of IMPACT.

Shay Cody, IMPACT

Delegates Shay Cody from IMPACT.

Trade Union visitors to Ireland are amazed at the absence of collective bargaining rights in the country and this includes trade unionists from the UK, the United States and all of our EU partners. Ireland is unique with a Supreme Court observation determining national policy on a fundamental human right. The supreme court has on two occasions considered the matter and concluded that the constitutional right to association also implies the right of this association, giving employers the right to refuse to engage with the trade union representatives of a workforce. And in a recent Supreme Court ruling concerning Impact and Rynair, the Supreme Court made the observation that the Oireachtas has no power to introduce a law granting the right to union recognition. Where does that leave us? Internationally and this matter it leaves Ireland as the most reactionary State in the developed world. It's argued by some employers, ministers, and industrial development organisations that a right to union recognition and bargaining would act as a barrier to foreign direct investment. That's nonsense, many FBI companies, like Hewlett Packard, IBM, Ikea, O2, Radisson deal with unions everywhere else in Europe and around the world. Their approach is simple, if they must do it they will, but if it's not mandatory, they won't. The key test on this issue is actually very obvious.

If the current situation gives Ireland a competitive advantage, you would imagine it would be an issue for President Sarkozy. This motion is a route-map to a solution. Ireland is in breach of its obligations under ILO Conventions. Impact along with Congress has lodged a complaint with the ILO which we hope will be heard later this year. An ILO Convention is an International Treaty binding on the State and the State includes the judiciary as well as the Government.

We're also aware of the EU charter of fundamental rights which provides for the right, not the option, to negotiate and conclude collective agreements. Most significantly there's the recent case law from the European Court of Human Rights. Most of us are aware of the Wilson Judgement which precludes victimisation of trade unionists. Minister Bruton recognises that this must be addressed and that the Government must ensure that Ireland's laws and conformity with the judgement. However, in answer to recent Parliamentary Questions he seems to be unaware of, or deliberately ignoring two other important cases. In Demir and Baykara, The European Court of Human Rights has ruled that the accepted right to join trade unions includes the right to bargain collectively and the right to strike. That's actually worth saying again. The European Court has determined that the right to join a trade union includes the right to bargain collectively. The programme for Government contains a commitment to reform the current legislation so as to ensure compliance by the State with the judgements of the court. This requires the Government to comply with the collective bargaining ruling as well as the empty victimisation one. We should not underestimate the difficulties we will face. The employers will declare themselves appalled. The Minister, who in the Dáil acknowledged that he is no expert in this field, has already indicated that there are no proposals in the programme for Government to compel an employer to engage in collective bargaining with a union. He clearly was not briefed on the meaning of the programme and the requirements arising from the Court's Ruling. This Motion requires the incoming Executive to prioritise engagement with Government with a view to securing the implantation of the terms of this Motion. We should all agree on this priority. The President spoke earlier about the Motion dealing with the commission being the most important item on this agenda. This is,

to use Sheila Noonan's phrase, this is the twin of that motion, it is an equal priority, we must pursue at the highest levels. I move.

Patricia King, Vice President

Thank you very much Shay. May I have a seconder?

Mike Jennings, Irish Federation of University Teachers

Mike Jennings of the Irish Federation of University Teachers, seconding Motion No. 17.

Chairperson and Delegates, I think it's fair to say that one thing that really energises and really makes people angry is hypocrisy. And I want to tell you something that you may not be aware of. The next time when you see Brendan McGinty or some other flunky from IBEC on the television talking about the need to resist the trade union democratic right to collective bargaining, ask yourself where does IBEC's finances come from? And your going to be very surprised at where those finances come from. Because my union, through persistent use over a long period of time and against many obstacles exposed that in the university's they had paid over to IBEC something in the order of 2 million in subscription fees in the last number of years. Dominic Hannigan, The Labour Party TD for Meath, did a similar exercise with regards to the semi state companies and other companies under the aegis of various Ministers. And it's revealed that there's millions literally coming in affiliation fees from such bodies, effectively taxpayer's money. Ask yourself, we had a situation some years ago where it was being suggested that if the Trade Union Movement became too strong they might consider attacking the check off. But one thing they had to recognise was that the trade union is financed from our money, our member's money, our member's hard earned money. And what most people in this country don't realise is that if taxpayer's money was withdrawn from IBEC, IBEC could cease to exist as a lobby group. That would be a dream outcome in my opinion. I think we'd be a better society without them. I think if what I'm telling you today is news to you, and I expect it's news to many of you, think of how much news it is to your brothers and sister and to your neighbours at home. I would ask you to consider making representations to your TD's and Politicians and ask them do they approve of financing out of the public purse an organisation which actively campaigns against one of the fundamental human rights in the charter of human rights which is the right to collective bargaining. It's an issue of principal, we shouldn't tolerate hypocrisy, we shouldn't finance our opponents, we should expose them and we should de-finance them. I ask you to support the motion. Thank you very much.

Patricia King, Vice President

Thank you Mike. Now other speakers to that Motion? Motion No. 17?

Jimmy Kelly, UNITE

Thanks Patricia. Just a few brief points in addition to what Shay and Mike have said.

First of all it's a short time ago since we had the Lisbon Second Referendum. The promises that were made on employment rights, workers' rights, we were going to have rights way beyond any other country in Europe and we can see what's happened since the passing of the Lisbon Referendum. All of the rights are under attack rather than boosting any of the rights that we had. We have a Government in addition to what Shay and Mike have pointed out. A Government out of line with an EU directive on pension protection fund. Our union with the financial support of SIPTU have had to take that to the courts here in

Ireland. It's now moved to the Courts in Europe to try and establish the rights of Irish workers to have that EU directive, which is in place across the EU. Again Governments, Fianna Fail, new Government not prepared to do the decent thing by working people.

We also in recent days have heard Minister Bruton indicate the Government's intention to streamline the work of employments rights bodies here. The LRC, Rights Commissioners, NERA and the Employment Appeals Tribunal. But however what is glaringly absent from the statements by Minister Bruton, is reference to workers' rights, it is more concerned with making sure that one side, namely the employers are not going to be affected by the rights that are outlined in the motion and those rights on free collective bargaining. We have a programme for government promise that we will address that right and we now once again don't hear the Minister mention that fact. Congress's position needs to be absolutely lined out as soon as possible so that Congress can engage with Government Ministers, especially Labour Party Ministers to make sure that we're getting that commitment from the programme for Government in the direction that we want it. Rather than we wait and we react to Government policies dictated by IBEC. So we need to move as fast as possible. So support Motion 17.

Patricia King, Vice President

Thank you very much Jimmy. So are there other speakers to Motion No. 17?

Brian Forbes, MANDATE

Comrades, Brothers and Sisters, Brian Forbes on behalf of MANDATE Trade Union supports Motion No. 17.

River Island, IKEA, Harvey Norman, House of Fraser, Harvey Nicholls, B&Q, Forever 21, Gap, Dunnes Stores, Dublin Licence Trade, Lidl and Aldi, just a few companies in retail who don't recognise unions for collective bargaining purpose. Support the Motion. Thank you.

Patricia King, Vice President

Thank you very much speaker. Are there any other speakers to Motion No. 17? No. Okay we'll move on then if we may to Motion No. 18 and Motion No. 18 comes in the name of the NUJ.

Norma Prenderville, National Union of Journalists

President, Delegates, Norma Prenderville on behalf of the National Union of Journalists.

This Motion has particular resonance for us because a lot of our members are working on a freelance basis, but it also affects numbers of workers in other unions, people like voiceover actors, session musicians. Not huge numbers of workers but make no mistake the issues that is involved in this is symptomatic of a system that seeks to restrict trade union rights, hobble trade unions, just as now they're trying to dismantle the JLCs, the REA's (Tape 8, 271) and so on. We want to draw attention to the fact that under Section 4 of the competition act we cannot negotiate, set or even advise on minimum for our members, even though they are full members of the Union paying their subs. And this is because the competition authority views all a typicals and some freelance workers and some other a typical workers as commercial undertakings and claims that these workers that to give them any rights to negotiate rates would represent a form of price fixing and in a bizarre

turn of events then you have the Competition Authority whose job it is to regulate commercial practises, to prevent price fixing and cartels among conglomerages and big business. Instead what do they do? They choose to target the small fish, if you like, the actor who does the ad for Dominos Pizza and banks indeed and at the same time ignore all the big sharks out there swimming around in the Irish Economy. So while you have the likes of Fingleton, Fitzpatrick and others playing us all like fools, the competition authority actually threatened the union official with the prospect of a prison sentence because of her actions in negotiating on rates of pay for voiceover actors, which is absolutely daft when you come to think about it. But that threat was used by other employers, particularly regional newspaper employers who used it to drive down rates.

You have a situation where a photographer could be asked to go on a job, 20, 40, 50 miles away for a rate as low as 30 euro and make him wait a month or so to be paid even that pittance. And it's kind of hard to credit really that somebody taking pictures maybe of the Kilbeggan Races would have such a disastrous effect on the Irish economy that the Competition Authority finds the need to interfere. And you'd have to well ask who benefited from this? There was no drop in the price of newspapers, there was no drop in theatre tickets, there was no drop in the price of eds on radio and certainly your Dominos Pizza didn't come any cheaper. Now in Towards 2016 there was a specific clause which would have removed freelance workers from the ambit of the Competition Authority. Now Social Partnership, that element of the social partnership may well have collapsed but we certainly want that aspect of that programme implemented and that's contained in our motion. The commitment that was entered in that was based on legal advice and it was a means of providing what are vulnerable and very often low paid workers a way of guaranteeing or securing at least minimum rates of pay and the right to collective bargaining and collective representation and that's at the nub of this motion. Our position is that the Government can't any longer. The last Government failed to implement that, this Government cannot, we believe, hide behind the European competition law to deny our members the rights, which we demand for all workers, the right to be collectively represented, so that they are not at the mercy of unscrupulous employers. And in urging you to support the motion calling on the Executive to give immediate priority to campaign for removal of the workers from the competition law. This motion is very much in line with the two previous motions calling for the right of collective bargaining. So please even though we're a small number of workers effected we'd urge you in the name of trade union solidarity to roundly support our motion. Thank you.

Patricia King, Vice President

Thank you very much Delegate. Now may we have a seconder for the Motion?

Seamus Dooley, Vice President, National Union and Journalist

Vice President, Seamus Dooley NUJ seconding this Motion. Norma has dealt with the implications of the competition authority adjudication in relation to a typical workers but I would also draw Conference's attention to the fact that the commitments contained in Towards 2016 also included commitments in relation to employee representation, to anti victimisation, and to many of the issues discussed already in earlier debates and highlighted in particular by Shay Cody. That agreement was signed up to by IBEC and as far as I'm concerned IBEC and the Government still have a solemn obligation to in relation to this. The terms in relation to pay of this agreement were fairly miserable and the reason why my union and so many other unions back Towards 2016 was a contained

specific commitments which IBEC agreed to, which Government signed up to and I have a difficulty, a very real difficulty with people who seem to think that we enter into a solemn international obligations which we cannot walk away from but it's ok to walk away from obligations entered into with a trade union movement. I didn't spend so many long miserable nights waiting for Patricia King and David Begg to come back from some secret chamber to be left waiting around for years. They used to say that a definition of a gentleman was someone who once bought stayed bought. I think on this one we were taken for fools, we weren't bought. We knew what we were entering into because we believe that the people we were negotiating would honour their agreements. Change of Government, change of circumstances, it doesn't make any difference. We've got the commitments we want them honoured. I second the Motion.

Patricia King, Vice President

Thank you Seamus. Now are there other speakers to that motion?

Mary Ferris, UNISON

Mary Ferris, UNISON, supporting Motion 18.

Workers' rights are fundamentally human rights. They include a right to join a union, to organise a union, to recognised, to bargain collectively and to strike. Successive UK and Irish Governments have signed up to all manner of human rights conventions, protocols and declarations. But with stunning hypocrisy they have continuously broken their word when it comes to workers and their unions. The biggest attack in the UK came during the Thatcher era. Little was done during the Blair and Browne eras to redress the attack on workers' rights. Now Cameron and Clegg are on the assault again. They are targeting unions in general and public services unions, in particular. We have just started a campaign through the Irish Congress of Trade Unions to reverse the anti-trade union laws. When police and injustice was devolved a year ago it came with the ability to change our own employment and trade union laws. We had a promise of a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland on the Good Friday Agreement. We are very clear that it includes social and economic rights and we are equally clear that it also means trade union rights. Most of our allies in the civic society have backed us for the need for workers and trade union rights. Now we have to press the politicians to back us too. Workers have fought and died for trade union rights and we need to throw their full support behind this motion. Thank you.

Patricia King, Vice President

Thank you very much speaker. Are there other speakers for Motion No. 18? No? I think we'll move on then to Motion No. 19 in the name of CWU.

Carol Scheffer, CWU

Thank you President, General Secretary and Delegates.

Carol Scheffer, CWU formally moving Motion No. 19. The CWU Motion on precarious and vulnerable employments is one that we believe must be a firm focus of the trade union agenda going forward. As Motion 19 is a lengthy Motion I won't read it out in its entirety, however there are some crucial points which need to be made around it. A key part of the work of trade unions has been the development of legal protections for

workers. This is the life blood of the Trade Union Movement with these legal protections ranging from maternity leave, parental leave, health and safety protections and so on. Dismantling of hard won employment protection rights is not something my union is willing to tolerate. We therefore cannot afford to stand back and allow decades of employment legislation eroded through precarious contracts. It is evident that those who oppose the achievements of Trade Union Movement have added another string to their bow as they move and reorganise large groups of workers out of those protections that we have fought so hard to achieve. They do this by amending workers status so that self employed, agency, temporary workers, contractors and so on. The casualisation of these contracts means that these workers must take on and be solely responsible for their own finance, their own sick and holiday cover and many more terms and conditions that we cannot afford to take for granted. And we must ask ourselves where does that leave the Trade Union Movement in the lives of these working people? In many cases they are legally deprived of union protection on spurious reasons such as competition laws. Many workers are now asking themselves what is really meant by secure employment? Many are looking at those who are in vulnerable employments and wondering are they next? And they should be worried because the question of their job security is worrying, the numbers of those categories of workers is growing at an alarming rate. It is clear therefore Delegates, that more and more established and worthy full time jobs are being dismantled in favour of now well-known precarious and vulnerable employments.

We must also take note of the prevalence of unpaid internship programmes and I commend Congress for highlighting this issue in their report. We cannot afford to see paid positions replaced by unpaid internships. While we recognise the role internships play in building vital work experience, we must support the call for proper monitoring and job criteria to protect interns.

President and Delegates as our Motion refers this Conference calls on the Executive Council to identify the loopholes in employment legislation that are being exploited by employers to deny workers their rights. To develop a strategy, to combat flexexploitation and precariousness and to improve the rights and protections available to all workers including own account economically dependant, self employed workers to undertake a continuous national campaign and this Conference calls on the Executive Council to extend to the union connect fair wage campaign to boost membership among vulnerable workers. Therefore I call on Conference to support this Motion so we as a movement can mobilise behind these workers and protect the jobs today which could become the precarious work of tomorrow. Thank you.

Patricia King, Vice President

Thank you very much speaker. Now have we a seconder for Motion No. 19? Have we a seconder for Motion ...

Stephen Kennedy, Unison

Good afternoon Conference. I'm supporting this good motion from the communications orders. We're pleased to support this Motion as we recognise our workers in both jurisdictions on this Island who are being exploited. Workers who do not know their rights, workers who live in fear of losing their job. Colleagues as much as 20% the workers in

the public sector are employed by contactors. A lot work as home care workers or work in nursing homes. Many are migrant workers. Just yesterday I talked to a girl in County Antrim who works for a contractor and she gets paid seven pounds an hour, something like that. She gets an extra 40 pence an hour for working Saturday and an extra pound an hour for working Sunday. I was completely surprised to find out she used her car for work and didn't get paid for the fuel. She not didn't get paid for the fuel but she didn't get paid for the time it took her to go in between calls. This is pure abuse. I asked her why she didn't complain and she said because they would cut my hours. This woman has two kids and she doesn't want to lose any money. This is a shame on our society. However colleagues I am proud that we are organising in these areas and proud that Unison has its hidden workforce project to highlight this expectation of hidden workers. These working practices cannot continue. These workers need legislation to punish these scum suckers, these bottom feeders and these companies who abuse these vulnerable workers. Please support this valuable motion. Thank you.

Patricia King, Vice President

Thank you very much Stephen. Are there other speakers now to Motion 19?

Jack O'Sullivan, TEEU

Jack O'Sullivan, Cork Branch, TEU.

Comrades, Brothers, Sisters I come to speak on this motion here today now because recently I had an incident where I was talking to an apprentice and he said he wasn't getting his rates pay so I said I'd represent him and said it to the union and I tried to get back on to him about situation and he said to me that he was invited into a meeting down on the site he was working in and that the foreman said to him I heard about that you've been talking to certain people and if I find that anyone inside in this room is talking to people they shouldn't be talking to, you're going to be put in temporary layoff and that's it. I don't care about your apprenticeship. I don't care about your rights or values or your training or anything like that. You're going to be put in temporary layoff and I'd just like to use it as an example of why we should support this Motion. Thank you.

Thank you very much speaker. And another speaker Motion No. 19?

Phil Ní Sheaghdha, Irish Counsels and Midwives Organisation

Thank you chair. Phil Ní Sheaghdha Irish Counsels and Midwives Organisation speaking in support of Motion 19.

The employment situation for nurses and midwives in Ireland at the moment in the Republic is in the HSE employment. You can now only get a job if you join an agency first and we believe this is a cynical attempt by the HSE to use the moratorium that's in place, preventing employment to get out of their obligation as an employer. The agency that has the contract for practically all of the Republic of Ireland doesn't recognise trade unions, doesn't have grievance and disciplinary procedures in place and we don't believe that that's a coincidence. The only time agency nurses and midwives will be able to argue that their employer is actually the HSE is under the unfair dismissals legislation when they are already dismissed. Delegates we urge you to support this Motion.

Patricia King, Vice President

Thank you very much Phil. Are there any further speakers now on Motion No. 19? No? Okay I'll proceed on then to Motion No. 20. Comes in the name of the CPSU. Blair?

Blair Horan, Vice President, CPSU

Vice President, Delegates, Blair Horan, CPSU.

The purpose of this motion really is to try and copper fasten the principle that the motions on low pay we've passed over the years that there's an onus on us at negotiating teams to implement them. Now look we know that full scale public sector wage bargaining is not going to resume in the immediate future. I suspect when we do get back to that table in normal negotiation mode that the agreements made by unions like Verdi in Germany will have a far greater influence on events than was the case here before and past experience that should be positive at least from the point of view of lower paid workers. The facts show that in the OECD pay differentials between the top and the bottom are about four and half to five times. Irish Civil Service over the past decade they reached as high as eight to ten times of a differential. A little bit like housing where gross income to house prices was around on average five times, went as high as thirteen to fourteen times. That was the key factor that destroyed our economy over the past decade when the Government chose in the late 90's the wrong response to the house price rises in the run up to the Euro. We in the CPSU actually warned of the consequences of that wrong response as early as April of 1998. We were the first to set out that basic relationship of gross income and house prices. Along with SIPTU in 1999 we issued a report that called for control of land prices. Nobody listened to us, and to be honest I'm not even sure that we persuaded all of our colleagues on the Executive Council at the time. The Government's position was the relationship was between net income and house prices. That was a fundamental mistake. The lower the income tax rates went the higher net income went and the bigger the bubble in the economy grew. The more the economy grew the more reports of the High Review Body on Remuneration were sanctioned. Pay increases over the decade for ordinary workers in public and private sector were somewhere in the order of 40 to 50% over the decades. Secretary Generals were closer to 100%. Back in the PPF negotiations, back in 2000, four unions sat down in advance and agreed a strategy prioritised low pay. Unfortunately under the pressure of the Celtic Tiger dividend that actual agreement broke down. That in part as well was driven by the rising house prices at the time. The PPF became an 18% deal when the pre Euro norm over the previous decade was about half that. Charlie McCreevy largely responsible for all of that by letting inflation out of control. On that difficult night when the pension levy was muted part of the proposal was that some people in the higher review body or rather bench marking system at the higher end of the Civil Service would actually get pay increases as well as having to take the pension levy. That broke down. I'm happy to say that sanity did prevail eventually, in the context of the Croke Park Agreement, prioritising those on average incomes and lower paid of 35 thousand and below. That is a good strategy in my view. It's something that we need to build on. At the end of the day it's about fairness, it's about fairness in the economy, fairness in terms of lower paid workers and average earners. But it's also about building a sustainable economy and not the bubble economics of the past decade. Thank you Delegates. I ask you to support the Motion.

Patricia King, Vice President

Thank you very much Blair. (end of tape some text missing)

Denis Walsh, President CPSU

Hello Denis Walsh, President CPSU to second the Motion and just to say a few words. I hope I'm not going to be too garbled on this. As Blair's pointed out the attacks really on the low paid and other members of the Civil Service started with the pension levy. That was followed then by pay cuts within the Civil Service and Public Service and then they started to attack everybody. With universal service charge, stripping everybody, both public and private, within the public and private sector of their hard earned pay conditions. We in the CPSU have always said that struggle that we faced, and face is the struggle that every worker, especially on low pay faces and I'm proud to report that the CPSU National Executive unanimously adopted a Motion deploring the planned attacks on our Brothers and Sisters in the private sector though the Government's desire to reform JLCs etc.

We each of us in this great movement shine a small light of fairness in the gloom of the greed ridden morass that surrounds us. Together our individual light can join and expose the true reasons for our woes, greed, nothing but greed. I second. Thank you very much.

Patricia King, Vice President

Thank you very much seconder. Now are there any speakers to Motion No. 20? No speakers to Motion No. 20? Okay. I'm now going to move to take the votes on those motions. Will I take the votes on the Motions first and then we'll return to the Annual Report?

Okay so we're going for Motion No. 16. So all those in favour of Motion No. 16. Against. Abstentions. That's carried.

And then we move onto Motion No. 17 all those in favour of Motion NO. 17. And against. And Abstentions. So that Motion No. 17 is carried.

Moving onto Motion No. 18. All those in favour of Motion No. 18 and against. Abstentions. And that Motion is carried.

I move on now to Motion No. 19. All those in favour of Motion No. 19 and against. Abstentions. Okay so that Motion is carried.

And then the final Motion in this lot is No. 20. All those in favour of Motion No. 20 and against? Abstentions? That Motion No. 20 is carried.

Okay there are Report Sections I want to make reference that make opportunity for speakers to the relevant report sections there. So Chapters One, Chapters Two, Chapters Three and Four. Have we any speakers to that debate? Any Speakers could you come forward please?

Noel Ward, INTO

Vice President, Delegates I want to speak on Section Five, Chapter Two of the report on the matter of public services pensions. There isn't a resolution before the conference on public services pensions and there's two reasons which drew me to speak here. One was a comment on the report about engaging with the Department of Finance on the proposal in relation to public service pensions and the other was I suppose just asking myself about my own union situation where we will be balloting after the summer on industrial action on pensions among our members in Northern Ireland but we're not doing the same among our members in the Republic of Ireland and that's curious because essentially the changes in pensions, the diminution of pension entitlements is really the same in both jurisdictions. But the key difference that in the Republic of Ireland the changes apply to new entrants only, whereas in Northern Ireland and also in Britain the pension changes affect serving workers.

The changes have a lot in common. One thing they have in common is that there is no evidential basis for them and the need for evidence based policy making has been emphasised a number of times at this conference. At the discussions that took place regarding public service pensions with the Department of Finance and under the auspices of the LRC, the fundamental matter of what savings were required, show us the evidence and let's discuss if there's a pension problem long term for the public service. That was never put on the table by the Department of Finance. And exactly the same thing is happening in Britain and in Northern Ireland in that the Tory Lib Dem Government is not putting that evidence on the table. And that shows up I think really that the attack on pensions in the public service is serving a wider purpose and the wider purpose is to drive pensions down right throughout the workforce among workers in the public service and in the private sector. And I think it's important for us not to be divided on issues like that. But I just want to say that I think there is an issue for us in the Trade Union Movement about this, about the ring fencing of changes to new entrants to the workforce and looking after people already in. And in the Public Service and the Republic of Ireland new entrants this year face both a pay cut of at least 10% plus very much inferior pension conditions to serving workers. And I just want to I suppose say something about solidarity in that regard because it is important for our movement to be about more than just looking after serving workers and the conditions of serving workers as we did in the Croke Park Agreement in terms of public servants in the public service. That was for serving people. New entrants are being treated differently. The same is happening in pensions and we need to be careful I think, in terms of looking to the future, that our future members feel that this movement stands in solidarity with them also in a kind of an intergenerational solidarity with them. In not just protecting the conditions of serving staff and serving workers but also looking to the wider question of what happens to new entrants and to future workers. Jack O'Connor referred this morning to people not yet born and preserving conditions for them. I'm very much saying we should also look after conditions for people who are very much born and who are coming into our workforce in the years ahead. Thank you.

Patricia King, Vice President

Thank you Noel. Any further speakers?

Tom Geraghty, PSEU

Tom Geraghty, PSEU speaking to Section 2, Chapter 1 of the Report of the Executive Council.

And I'm prompted to get up here because that particular section of the report deals with the aftermath of social partnership. And I think we're in serious danger of leaving here without having any discussion about something that I would suggest is at least amongst the most important immediate short term issues for us. If you look at that particular section you will see that there's reference made to the Croke Park Agreement, which obviously sets out an apparatus through which the Public Service Unions can deal with Government, as an employer and equally there's a protocol in the private sector and indeed as we all know there are day to day contacts at employer level, each individual employment level in the private sector. But the gap in all of that is the tripartite relationship between us as a national movement and the employers and Government. And if you think that's not particularly important and it has become fashionable to decry it just consider that Motion 16 to 19 that we've just debated there, all deal with issues that require legislation in order to resolve them. And we're in serious danger, it seems to me, of regressing back to the situation where we're most comfortable which is just putting ourselves in opposition where we're not expected to take any responsibility for negotiating solutions that require us to engage with employers and Government on national issues. And I would suggest to you that that be singularly ill advised and I think we need to have a debate and I'm a little bit disappointed that we haven't had any discussion about it at all. About where we're going to go now in terms of our relationship with employers, IBEC and with Government because if we're to resolve the sort of issues that we refer to in Motion 16 to 19, we have to be able to have some sort of formal process to which we engage with employers and with Government. And I would suggest to you, going back to some of the comments that were made by the General Secretary and the President, I would suggest to you that the best ordered, most successful and fairest societies in Northern Europe all have formal processes through which Governments engage with employers and trade unions and it should be our aspiration to get back to that situation. Whether we call it social partnership or anything else and I'm certainly not advocating that we re-establish all the elaborate architecture of social partnership but we do certainly need to start considering how we redefine our relationship in the aftermath of the collapse of social partnership.

Patricia King, Vice President

Thank you Tom. Next speaker?

Sinead McKenna, CPSU

Sinead McKenna, CPSU speaking in a personal capacity.

Patricia King, Vice President

Sinead I presume your speaking as a Delegate?

Sinead McKenna, CPSU

Section 2, Chapter 1, there's parts in this where it quite rightly says that the last active treachery by the outgoing Fianna Fáil green coalition Minister Mary Hanafin was to establish the independent review framework to examine the statutory wage setting mechanism such as ERO's, JLC's and REA's and it goes then to say that it's an exercise in

defeat if the collective bargaining rights of people, collective bargaining strengths is at an all-time low then fine words from the EU Commission and our Government during the Lisbon debate about respecting workers' rights, this would be seen to have been nothing but an exercise in defeat. These are from the annual reports. So the words treachery and deceit were what struck me. Those allegations quite rightly made are aimed at the previous Fianna Fáil/Green Government. But these acts of treachery and deceit are now being implemented by Labour and after reading this I want to query why the Trade Union Movement align themselves to a party that are now implementing the treacherous and deceitful acts of the previous Government?

I would suggest, I think that we should disassociate ourselves from the Labour Party seen as this is now their course of action and we should make our unhappiness known to Mr Gilmore when he comes down to this Conference tomorrow. Thank you.

Patricia King, Vice President

Thank you. Are there any further speakers? Are there any ... Frank.

Frank Barry, UNITE

Frank Barry, UNIT, speaking to Chapter 3, a Safer Workplace, pages 37 to 38.

Conference I want to draw your attention to this particular section of the report. Firstly let me just say thank you to the Health and Safety Committee and more importantly to Eamon Devoy's Chair and to Esther Lynch who serves that committee on behalf of Congress. It's their drive and enthusiasm that has been fantastic for those members of that committee to do the work that has been carried on at the moment and I think it would be negligent of me, on behalf of the committee, not to thank them for their services. But more importantly can I also draw you attention to what we would talk about in the last page, I think it's page 38, where we make reference to Workers Memorial Day. Workers Memorial Day is a day set on the 28th April to remember those people who have been killed in our workplaces. On average we killed 50 people every year so if I was to ask the first four rows of this congress to stand up if the seat were all full, that's the amount of people we're looking at. And that all happened together there would be a major inquiry into it but what is even worse than that is that I can take one row, just one row, and those people have died of suicide due to work pressures and stress in their workplace. What a catastrophic phenomenon that is happening. And it's going on in year in and year out. What we want to do is to ensure that while we have a small gathering, quite a substantial gathering at the last two events of the Workers Memorial Day, where we had community people, church leaders and members of Congress present. We want to enlarge that process by getting a listing of the safety refs and this is where the affiliates can help us by sending onto the Health and Safety Committee or into Congress the list of the reps in every company so that we can contact and liaise with them and improve health and safety in the workplace. I'm asking for your support. Thank you.

Patricia King, Vice President

Thank you Frank. Okay could I just ask if Ms Bernie McCray from Congress Disability Committee is available because she's scheduled as the next speaker.

And while Bernie is preparing to come to the rostrum I'm going to put the Chapters of the Report relevant to the debate we've just had, Rights in the Workplace, Chapter One The

Aftermath of Partnership, Chapter Two Better Leave Schemes, Chapter Three A Safer Workplace, Chapter Four Union Rights are Human Rights. So could I put those Chapters to Conference please? All those in favour? All those against? Abstentions? Thank you Conference.

Okay we'll ask Bernie now please. So Conference would you welcome Ms Bernie McCray from the Congress Disability Committee? Thank you Bernie.

Bernie McCray from Congress Disability Committee

Thank you Chair, Conference, Delegates, Guests. I'm Bernie McCray and I'm Chair of the Northern Ireland Disability Committee. Deirdre O'Connor is Chair of the Southern Ireland Committee.

People with disabilities are under attack from the Governments North and South with cuts in services, disability benefits and indeed accusations of fraud and malingering. Unfortunately the media have taken up the course in demonising disabled people. The result is an increase in hate crimes and strangers in the street feel at liberty to challenge disabled people and enquire about their benefits and generally just abuse them. Currently 50% of disabled people are unemployed. Many never had a chance to work. Closure of Remploy and sheltered employment is throwing disabled people onto labour market where there are no jobs. The disabled people are then placed in unsuitable employment schemes which often results in being back on the dole again, the revolving door syndrome. Children with disabilities are affected where schools are cutting back on inappropriate resources. Teachers are concerned that the new academies in England are cherry picking and not providing the special education for children with special needs. Reduction in public service jobs will further hurt disabled people. Disability Committees North and South meet regularly and have organised successful seminars over the last two years, you will have read about this in the Executive Report. We believe all unions should aim to have a dedicated seat on their Executive Councils for disabled member. And also there should be a reserve seat on ICTU Executive for disabled person. I'm pleased to say that my own union, Unite has just recently changed their rules to allow for a seat for a disabled member on the National Committee. This is in the true spirit of equality.

In the workplace companies plead ignorance about access to work available to employers, often leading to dismissal when a worker acquires a disability. This is unlawful and must be avoided. It means a loss of talents and experience of the worker for the employer but the impact of unemployment on disabled person and their families from moving from a position of earning to living on and claiming benefits is immense. In regards to mental health illness the difficulty mostly faced is the disclosure regarding the mental health. This is often exacerbated by the work, by it's volume, by it's content and by management style, bullying and harassment, discrimination and poor work practices. Ethnic minority workers can be doubly disadvantaged due to cultural differences and misunderstandings, stereo typing and discrimination. People can be driven to despair and to suicide if no adequate systems are in place, bear in mind 30% of people with disabilities live in poverty. Mental health must be treated like any other disability and reasonable accommodation made. There is no stigma in mental health disability. There is an ignorance and discrimination. Disability champions in their training and personal research are familiar with their wide range of disabilities and the associated legislation.

Recently one of our champions was instrumental in getting a specially adapted computer for a member with deteriorating vision and another for achieving additional time off for a non-national following surgery who was fearful of losing his job if he had taken the required time off. Another champion negotiated specific area for an insulin dependent diabetic to give his injections. Previously he had to inject himself in full view of his colleagues or in the toilet. I would like to pay tribute to the ICTU staff who have been very supportive in the establishment of the Disability Champion Movement. In particular the Equality Officers, David Joyce and Pauline Buchanan and also particularly Jane Clare who worked very hard to establish the Disability Champion Movement. The Champions are increasing in numbers. There are now over 160 trained throughout Ireland and their enthusiasm and interest is immense.

NIC ICTU in partnership with the Equality Commission in Northern Ireland have set up a Disability Champions Forum which meets quarterly and the disability champion staff, Michelle Morris updates the Champions on the Disability Legislation and a proper network has been established to enable the Champions to share and exchange information. Sadly Jane has decided to leave ICTU and pursue an academic career. We will be sorry to lose her and we wish her all the best for the future. I would just like to encourage people to continue to think about their disabled colleagues and bear in mind that disability is one situation which we could all encounter. The majority of disabilities are acquired during the working life of an individual. I spoke to a young man recently with an intellectual disability and severe epilepsy, who never had the opportunity to work and he said to me we all want the same things, we all have beating hearts. Thank you.

Patricia King, Vice President

Thank you very much Bernie. So we move on now to Motion No. 21 in the name of the PSEU. I was just looking around for the General President. This auld tea break is going on a bit long. If he doesn't come back soon there will be no conference to come back to but anyway we'll press on. Motion No. 21.

Tom Geraghty, PSEU

Tom Geraghty, PSEU proposing Motion 21. I suppose if we'd been having this discussion about a year ago this particular motion would be somewhat controversial because at that stage we were still debating amongst ourselves about the merits or otherwise of entering into the Croke Park Agreement. And I want to acknowledge that those colleagues that opposed us entering into the agreement frequently put forward cogent arguments and well motivating reasons for staying out of it. But for those of us who advocated the need to entering into that particular arrangement, we were always motivated by the very simple consideration that the choice wasn't between good and bad but it was a choice between a degree of stability and continued agonising uncertainty. And I think we chose well, quite frankly, an agreement that has been subject to an almost hysterical level of hostility amongst our commentariat has survived the arrival of the IMF, it has survived a change of Government and it has survived its first review. And as a result of that survival, those people who work in the public service can continue to have the certainty, that for as long as they deliver on the terms of that particular agreement, their jobs are secure, notwithstanding the calamitous collapse in the economy and in our physical position and that they won't be subject to any further pay cuts.

So clearly the maintenance of the agreement is an ongoing success so far as public servants are concerned. But I would also suggest to you that all of the evidence is that it has been a considerable success for the country. In circumstances where there are very few good news stories we have shown, and it hasn't been easy and it hasn't been painless, but we have shown with the right commitment and the right application on the part of both the management and ourselves, we saved over 600 million in costs in the course of one year and we also managed to generate a situation where costs avoided came to over 85 million. So close to 700 million is the value of this agreement in its first year of operation and that has to be a good news story because what that actually means to the citizens of the country is that we can continued deliver public services at a high level without any cutbacks.

On a general level I accept that there are exceptions to that, but on a general level we've been able to continue to deliver public services at a very high level to the citizens of this country. And while this particular agreement is not a partnership agreement, in fact it's a very old fashioned agreement, of the sort that arises whenever there's an employer in trouble and they engage with their workforce and in return for guarantees to the workforce the employees agree to give additional flexibilities and change of the sort that's required to keep the business afloat and that's the circumstance that we are in, it's not a circumstance that many of us ever envisaged in respect of the public service. I think the vast majority of people giving are past experience would have thought that the public service was a constant and was never likely to face the sort of challenges we had to face. But face them we have and it is working.

Now that said, I think we should acknowledge we're only one year into a four year agreement and that major threats and major challenges await us. And we can absolutely depend on the fact that the commentariat will continue to speak with one voice and that voice will be hostile because some of them will not be happy until they generate the circumstances such as we've seen in Athens in the last week. And what we have done is we've shown in the interest of the country and not just the interests of public servants, that it is possible to make a difference to the way we run our public services, it is possible to achieve significant savings and it doesn't require a direct conflict between Government as employer and employees. Now it's easy to diagnose the need for change and speak about change in a very general way. The reality of it is and I think we have to acknowledge this.

Patricia King, Vice President

Time Tom please.

Tom Geraghty, PSEU

I'll be very brief President. The reality is that change is and will be painful. Every time an organisation is shut down and there will be organisations shut down almost inevitably as a result of this comprehensive review of expenditure. That means staff, many of whom enjoy their job and are secure in their job will have to move and that isn't going to be easy for them. But it is far better than the alternative and one thing I will ask people when they go away from here today, and this is my last point President and I'll finish on this, is that when you go out and you talk to people outside, everybody has a view about the Croke Park Agreement and almost invariably for people outside the public service that view is shaped by our hostile commentariat. I think you should be prepared to

defend what we have achieved and I think you should be prepared to trumpet it as one of the few success stories in very difficult circumstances. Thank you.

Patricia King, Vice President

Secunder please? Is there a seconder? Formally, thank you very much. Are there any other speakers to Motion No. 21? Good. Speakers to Motion No. 21? Thanks.

Tracey Osment, UNITE

Tracey Osment, UNITE opposing Motion No. 21.

Conference I think we are all delusional if we think that our members and services will be protected by this so called public service agreement. If they've been protected then tell it to our members and to the public who have already lost their essential services or had them slashed to non-existence. If this agreement is working then why are our members more angry, more bullied, more harassed and more stressed by austerity measures enforced upon them in the work place? Some of us attended a meeting last week called Croke Park One Year On where we were subjected to a group of people patting themselves on the back on how well they had done to hit their targets in regards to the cutbacks and now another 20 thousand jobs had to go across the public sector before 2014 and we were left in no uncertain terms that they would take whatever steps and means possible they had to achieve this. They even gave our employers a weapon to use against us if we didn't comply. But they don't call it a weapon, they call it flexibility, mobility and redeployment. Well Conference we have a little weapon of our own and it's called consultation and information. A weapon our employers had thought we had forgotten about. So as a representative of frontline staff I cannot support a motion asking to protect the Public Service Agreement when it has never gone far enough to support and protect our members. Congress I ask to support and reject this Motion.

Patricia King, Vice President

Thank you speaker. Now have we a further speaker on Motion No. 21?

Maeve Fitzpatrick, UNITE

Maeve Fitzpatrick, Unite speaking against Motion 21.

This Motion presents the Public Service Agreement as a cure all which has safeguarded workers and services but public services haven't been protected. Cuts in staffing has hit the most vulnerable. Children in need of special support and schools for example. It hasn't protected thousands of public service contract staff who has lost their jobs, many of them union members and it hasn't protected new entrants who have suffered a further 10% pay cut. Ireland is already one of the most unequal societies in Europe. If we are to minimise the damage done over the coming years, we need to ensure that public services, particularly to the vulnerable, are as far as possible protected. We cannot do this if we pretend staffing and funding cuts have no impact on services. That's why we are asking that you oppose this Motion.

Patricia King, Vice President

Thank you Maeve. Thank you. Speakers?

Gene Mealy, SIPTU

Thank you Patricia. Gene Mealy, SIPTU.

In supporting the motion I think it is incumbent on us all to realise that members of the Trade Union Movement have given an enormous amount over the last two years in relation to rectifying the public finances. This union's members have suffered enormously and we will defend this agreement because we believe that this is a good agreement, we believe that this agreement will deliver for our members. But a note of caution, there cannot be a Croke Park mark 2 in respect of our membership and I would just caution the Government to say that if they come back for more, outside the terms of this agreement, it's not there. We've given enough and we will deliver on our promises and our commitments, but no more. Thank you.

Patricia King, Vice President

Thank you Gene. Any further speakers?

Shay Cody, IMPACT

I'm at a loss as to how the union that's affiliated to the public services committee can come up and ask this conference to reject this Motion because this Motion has already in effect being accepted by the members of the Public Service Unions. We had a ballot on Croke Park. Two thirds of unions voted to accept the agreement. Subsequently the significant number of unions who hadn't accepted it and had opted out, came in under the umbrella of the agreement. This Conference will create a constitutional nightmare if it decides to reject this motion. This motion spells out as Tom did that we do not have a pain free option on this. This is actually the dilemma that people face, whether it's in the public service or the private sector, when you're dealing with a boss who's broke. There aren't easy solutions. Croke Park isn't ideal but Croke Park provides us with something that any awful lot of other people in vulnerable positions would give their right arm for. It gives a guarantee that there'll be no compulsory redundancies, it gives a guarantee that they won't come back for further pay cuts and that's very easy to do. All they need is a piece of legislation and they also give us a route map to recover some of the losses that we've suffered whenever that opportunity arises. In the absence of that agreement and if this motion is rejected it leaves us absolutely vulnerable in the face of those whose greatest wish and desire is to set aside this agreement. I call on Delegates to support the Motion. Thank you.

Patricia King, Vice President

Thank you Shay.

Fearghal Broughan, INTO

Benjamin Franklin said that necessity never made a good bargain and in a lot of ways the Croke Agreement is a poor bargain, but is necessary, and it is one that we have voted on, and it's one as honourable people, once we vote on something we don't tear it apart. And it's been difficult to sell to our members but we have done it and it has been shown by implementation body we are standing by our side of it. Now if the Government decide on their half to tear it down then our reaction must be swift we must be sussed SUSS it must be speed, it must be uniformed, it must be strong and it must be sustained. But until that day we do the honourable thing and we stick by something that the majority of our members vote for. Please support the Motion.

Jack O'Connor, President

You want right to reply Tom?

Tom Geraghty, PSEU

I won't take too much time Chair. Shay Cody covered most the points I wanted to make. I mean the reality is that all of the individual unions conducted ballots on this and ultimately the majority voted in favour of the agreement and the interest democracy that presumably we're going to adhere to it. I do want to respond to one point that was raised, however, and that was a point that was raised by Gene Mealy about the prospect of Croke Park 2 as it were. And certainly if you read some of the commentary on the issues around Croke Park you can see that an awful lot of the media are urging Government to renegotiate the terms, and there's no question of that. Lets be clear and indeed to be fair when we met the Minister last week he assured us that that was not the Governments agenda. The agreement is sufficiently flexible, provides sufficient flexibility to enable the changes that are required in the delivery of our public services, in order to reduce the cost of providing them, while at the same time providing the guarantees that the agreement gives to the people who work in the public services. So there's no need for and there's no suggestion of a renegotiation of Croke Park. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thanks Tom. And now could I ask the CPSU to move Motion No. 22?

Eoin Ronayne, Civil Public Service Union

The bounding documents of this Republic puts the rights of the citizen very much the centre of our new state. The proclamation proudly declares that the commitment of the new republic is to equality for all. The democratic programme for Government went further in committing the fledging State to providing a fairer inclusive society for its citizens. Daily public sector workers deliver in a practical way on those commitments to fairness and equality.

Daily at the frontlines, nurses in hospitals, teachers in schools, outdoor workers in local authorities and civil servants in welfare offices, among many thousands of other workers, in other workplaces in jobs deliver for the citizens of this state. But delivering public services, while never easy, even in the so called tiger years has become even more difficult. Cuts and short staffing caused by the moratorium in part conspired to threaten and damage even the public services. At the frontlines public services workers are feeling battered and bruised. Not because of the difficulties in providing the services to the citizens, they've always risen to that challenge, but because of the criticism of them by a powerful right wing lobby which seeks to offload it's responsibility for the economic mess. it's the oldest trick colleagues in the book, when under pressure deflect the attention somewhere else and in the neo liberal right they have been doing that in a concerted campaign in the media and in civil society, seeking to take the spotlight off their disastrous role in creating the tiger bubble by creating a division between a public sector worker and a private sector worker. The best line of defence they say is to attack. Well right wing, well healed commentators in sections of our media, in Leinster House aided by their economic gurus working for financial institutions and some third level institutions, have been orchestrating an unrelenting blitzkrieg on the public sector worker. Daily workers in the public sector are subjected in the media to accusations of high earnings, gold plated

pensions, the so called fat cats are everywhere it seems. The constant use of the average wage in the public service is routinely used in the media without any explanation as to how it arises in the first place because of the range of jobs and professional qualifications. The members I represent at clerical levels in the civil service fall well short of that average. There's nothing fat cat about twenty thousand Euros a year to thirty-six over eighteen years. And the CPSU as a union will not apologise to any commentator for setting out to secure better pay and conditions for its members. We're tired of commentators attacking what we've achieved and what we're trying to defend.

What colleagues would we be about as trade unionists if not to stand up for workers pay and conditions? As a former journalist I understand well how the emphasis in a story can be manipulated by higher editorial authority and sometimes the headlines written by another doesn't always match the thrust of the story. But nothing can excuse the daily and weekly blatant targeting of ordinary workers by highly paid commentators who feel no need to achieve balance and fairness in the contents of their commentary. There's little point in complaining about that unfairness but as we said earlier we must redouble our efforts to use whatever outlets are available, whether print, broadcasting or new media to try and introduce balance into that debate.

Colleagues we must use the platform of this Conference bringing as it does public sector workers and private sector workers into common purpose to build a unity between all workers in the face of this assault on our right to represent members. Public sector workers do not live in reservations on the outskirts of cities and towns. They are very much part of society. Their partners and friends work in the private sector. Many of our members, partners, sons, daughters, brothers and sisters work in that private sector and many have lost jobs. To say public sector workers are protected from the brunt of the economic crisis is blatant nonsense. We must use this conference to send a message that's loud and clear, that public and private sector workers are at one. We are all citizens of this State and we are all entitled to fairness and equality as our founders declared. Colleagues I'm looking for your support in this Motion. I urge you to say no, clearly no, to division between us and yes to the resourcing of an efficient and comprehensive public service. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Eoin. Is there a seconder for Motion 22? Formally seconded. Thank you Denis.

Now Motion 23 on Care of the Elderly in the name of the GMB. Have we a mover? Formally moved? Is it formally seconded? Is the GMB here? Somebody coming in. Eamon. How are you Eamon?

Eamon Coy, GMB

Eamon Coy, GMB moving Motion 23 in respect of how we better care for the Elderly. Conference it is hard to believe that in the 21st Century we are forced to consider the facts that care of our elderly remains to terribly unregulated. Very similar concerns exist in Northern Ireland, very similar to that of here in the Republic. It is now time to dispel the myth that the private sector might somehow provide the answer to our needs.

Recently the largest care provider in the UK, Southern Cross has been faced with possible closure as a result of extortionate rents being charged by the owners of their 750 care

homes. In 2004 a US private equity fund by the name of Blackstone purchased the ill-fated Southern Cross for 162 million. During 2006 the firm made over 600 million through the floatation of Southern Cross on the stock market. Just three months previously Blackstone pocketed 1 billion from the selling of 294 Southern Cross care homes to the Royal Bank of Scotland. This is just part of the shocking story in respect of how this business was broken up for sale allowing for 80 different owners of the care home to charge rents way in excess of the market. Over 31,000 elderly residents are now faced with total uncertainty on respect of their future care plans. In addition 40,000 care staff face total job insecurity as a result of the reckless actions of these venture capitalists homing in on the elderly, vulnerable people and the process generating a huge profit.

In the Republic of Ireland in 2005 there was a huge exposure of abuses at a number of care homes, mainly run by the private sector. This brought about a decision by the Health Information and the Quality Authority to close a number of homes by way of example, the Glenberney Nursing Home in Bray, County Wicklow and Villa Marie Del Mar in Barna, County Galway. Most recently we have the shocking case of residents being abused at their Rostrevor Care Home in Dublin, abuses which again have resulted in the closure of this home. These experiences must not be allowed to go unnoticed.

It is high time that legislation was passed preventing private equity firms or other venture capitalists from entering the elderly care sector. In future all providers should be made to pass stringent tests ensuring that they are fit for purpose and are financially viable. There is an urgent need for a change in legislation and proper regulations underpinning care standards fit for the 21st Century, respecting the needs of vulnerable, elderly people. The status of social care across both jurisdictions is generally perceived as low, particularly in comparison with the health and nursing professions. Problems of chronic under funding by Governments and the fragmented nature of the sector with service provision being shared by local councils, the health service, private enterprise, voluntary organisations, and the mix of large and small employers. Staff experience very low rates of pay and almost non existing career progression. Lack of training and knowledge hampers the capability and confidence of care workers to provide the necessary level of care.

Conference I'm calling on Congress to develop a charter, for training with the respect of Government, for the implementation of a national coordinated system of vocational training and qualifications for the care sector with flexible career pathways to provide opportunity for career progression.

In conclusion Conference I'm also calling on Congress to argue for a national system of pay and conditions throughout the care sector. This in turn will improve and increase motivation and provide the rightful reward to a dedicated and rewarding workforce. Now most people would be aware that in the United Kingdom when Niall Bevan brought about the health service way back in 1945, the principle was sound back then that we should provide care for people from the cradle to the grave, and not from the cradle to many years before people perhaps leave this earth, but care out there in the community and care in properly run care homes is so terribly essential. And why is it that in Scotland care is provided free of charge, provided through taxation. Why is that system not acceptable in the Republic of Ireland and similarly across the UK. And I think it is a responsibility for each and every one of us here in this room to respect our elderly, but

more importantly to actually do something to provide them with dignity, the respect and the quality of care they so deserve in their older age. Thank you very much.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Eamon. And is there a seconder for the Motion? Formally seconded? Thank you Delegates. Now Motion No. 24 in the name of the IBOA dealing with the banking sector. Larry?

Larry Broderick, General Secretary, IBOA The Finance Union

Thank you very much President. Larry Broderick, General Secretary IBOA, The Finance Union asking you to support Motion 24.

Colleagues discredited senior management in the Irish banking system have played a pivotal role in destroying, not only our industry, but very importantly, creating a financial crisis that's leaving this economy destitute and also impacting on our colleagues in Northern Ireland. Of course the reality is that this is being supported by Government policy, light touch in terms of regulation. But the nett effect is going to have a major impact on my members in our industry and our colleagues throughout the Trade Union Movement working in our industry.

We stand today before you with a Government that has identified the two pillar approach to the future of this industry, which will have a nett effect of a minimum of over 6 thousand jobs to be eliminated over the number of years. And I use the word eliminated cautiously to reflect the arrogance of management in this industry and also the arrogance of the new Government that has forgotten the reality that banking is about people and about communities. Our resolution sets out to put in place a structure that talks about the Trade Union Movement playing a role in a future of an industry that needs to be reformed. I listened to the Taoiseach saying his door was open but the General Secretary of the Irish Congress of Trade Union has been asking for a meeting with this Government to talk about the future of this industry and the Minister for Finance and the door seems very clearly closed. Let this Conference say immediately that meeting needs to take place and it needs to take place now. But in essence colleagues it is the easy solution to talk about eliminating staff from the industry. If this Trade Union Movement is going to play our part in rebuilding our industry, radical change needs to happen. The people in the boards of the banks need to be eliminated with senior management and not eliminated with golden handshakes, millions in pensions and futures looking at alternatives to come back through private equities to buy some of the businesses that NAMA will try to sell and that needs to stop and needs to stop now.

Secondly, if there is going to be jobs reduced I can say to Conference today there will be no cooperation of change in our industry, unless we too get a Croke Park Agreement in our industry. We want a commitment of no compulsory redundancies. We want a commitment that you will sit down and negotiate and protect terms and conditions for our members and we want a commitment that in the context of change, that we will influence the future of our industry in a fair and reasonable fashion.

And finally colleagues let me talk about culture and we heard about whistle blowing from other resolutions today. But the reality in our industry that our members in the front line that have been vilified by their management, abused by their Government and by the

public, are afraid to speak up, because speak up in our industry means you will not have a job, you will be scapegoated, you will be sacked, or you will be put on a charter for further redundancy. And what we need in our industry is a whistle blowing charter as we've talked before with other trade unions to protect our members. Support this resolution and support it now. Thank you very much.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Larry. Is there a seconder for Motion 24? Formally seconded? Okay. Thank you Delegates, formally seconded, Motion 24. Motions 21, 22, 23 and 24 are before the floor for debate and I call speakers.

Edward Mathews, Irish Nurses and Midwives

President, Delegates, Edward Mathews, Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation speaking in support of Motion 22.

Speaking to you not only as a representative of public servants but as a grateful citizen for the services provided by public services in preservation of our State. The necessity for a modern and efficient public service is unquestionable and much of the commentary regarding such services purports to refer to these goals. This is simply untrue Delegates. The public are subject to a barrage of ill-informed but well delivered and very malignant motivated commentary geared towards either deriding or belittling public services and public servants. The reality creating rhetoric is demoralising, damaging and deeply disturbing as we all know that the only furrow being ploughed is the one that terminates in privatisation. I wish to reflect on the reality of our public services, briefly President, because one would be forgiven for thinking that we or people as public servants were gripped with such indolence that no activity took place. That there wasn't 1.5 million hospital admissions every year, that there was 3.2 million people attend outpatients departments, 1.1 million emergency department attendances, 23 thousand long stayed patients cared for, 5.5 thousand children in care cared for, 5 hundred thousand primary school educated, 314 thousand secondary school children educated, 720 million gallons of water treated and delivered to homes every day, 3 million tons of domestic waste processed, 4 thousand prisoners detained, 1.3 million welfare payments made every week to over 2 million beneficiaries and Gardai attending 17 thousand assaults per year. These are our public services and these are public services of which I as a citizen am very proud Delegates.

With your permission President I'd aggress briefly to offer what I'd hope is Conference's fraternal greetings to brave Garda O'Shay who's a public servant who's suffered a very serious assault recently and I wish to extend to him Conference's sincere support for a full and speedy recovery. I urge you to support this Motion and further to take it into your hands the defence of those public servants who defend not only us individually but in reality defend the democratic State, the type of State we support and the type of State that cares for every citizen. Thank you very much.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Delegate.

Stephanie Greenwood, UNISON

Chair, Delegates, Stephanie Greenwood, UNISON supporting Motion 22.

In times of economic crisis, the most important lifeline for everyone is in frontline public services, particularly in education, health, social care and housing. They are the absolute lifeline for the unemployed and the people classed as economically inactive. And of course in order to reverse the crisis we need a highly skilled, fit and healthy workforce and we can only do that through world class public services. In both parts of this Island, frontline public services are coming under the greatest attack since their creation. The enemy is doing a very good job of discrediting public servants and the services they provide. Hysteria is whipped up in the press with stories of high ranking civil servants with superb terms and conditions of employment and the protections that the majority of workers can only imagine. That hysteria creates a climate that enables the politicians to cut the heart out of the health and social services, close hospitals and schools and abandon public housing projects. It is a short-term and it is a disaster for the economies North and South. Any right thinking Government would right now be creating front line public sector jobs and expanding front line services. Let us remind them the National Health Service has not only worked well providing high quality care for everyone free of charge at low cost, it is also the historic achievement of millions of people, its principles of inclusion and equal access for all has been core values of our society. Working to privatise it without any public mandate is as close as it gets to becoming unscrupulous. Let us never accept this fundamental part of our heritage being stripped away. In this movement there is no them and us, there is only us and we are determined today to build a better society through the development of our world class public services. In an unprecedented show of unity let us just remind our Governments where the real powerhouse is and always has been, with us the workers. Please support the motion.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Delegate.

Brenda Johnston, UNISON

Chair, Delegates Brenda Johnston, UNISON supporting Motion 23 on Care of the Elderly.

The recent fiasco surrounding care provider Southern Cross highlights the damage and truth behind the privatisation of the elderly care. And the reality that social care is one of the greatest challenges faced in our society and one that affects us all. The way older people are treated is a measure of a civilised society. They have distributed throughout their lives and should be treated with dignity and respect; all too often they are not. Too many are forced to go into residential care when they would prefer to stay in their own homes. If they had better support they would do so. Unless our care systems are radically changed and reformed we will all suffer now just because many of us will need care ourselves or because three in five of us end up caring for ill or disabled relatives or because of the dangerous, social and economic cost of failing to act. The current situation is unsustainable. We need systems that are fair, transparent, flexible and sustainable. Wherever older people choose to live they should also be able to rely on services of high standards. The workforce that provides those services should be better paid, better trained, and better resourced. Endless cost cutting measures will only make this aim harder to meet.

In Northern Ireland there has been mass transfer of service delivery from the public sector to the private and voluntary sectors. We all know that this leads to reductions in the

quality of care for older people and reductions in terms and conditions for care workers. To the politicians we are clear, no cuts and social purse spending that will punish the poor and vulnerable. Social care services free for all paid by universal taxation, decent paying conditions, core employment and training standards for all care staff. Employers should pay for training and career pathways. These are the foundation stones on which we must build a future. Please support this Motion.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Delegate.

Mary Barrett, Irish Nurse and Midwives Organisation

Mary Barrett, Irish Nurse and Midwives Organisation speaking and supporting Motion 23.

President, General Secretary, Delegates, Brothers and Sisters, care of the elderly has always been looked at as the Cinderella model of nursing, that is you weren't really a nurse if you worked in elderly care. You were a real nurse if you worked in coronary care setting, or surgical ward. Residents in nursing homes did not require a lot of care, you only go into a nursing home because you're old, you can no longer cope living in your own home. This is not the case. Residents in our nursing home suffered from many complex conditions, such as dementia, diabetes, post stroke patients which require rehabilitation and numerous other conditions which require these residents to be taken care of by professional educated and confident staff. Many nursing home that are privately run, are providing one nurse to what complement of beds that are housed within the unit. This could be anything from twenty, forty, fifty or even sixty beds depending on the size of the unit. Now imagine the scenario of being a resident in a home where there are sixty residents, one nurse on duty. This means for each hour you would have one minute of this nurses' time. Twenty-four minutes in twenty-four hours. This nurse provides care supported by health care assistance, many of whom have no education in providing care to this group or elderly, one of the most vulnerable groups in society. We have all heard the stories of Lees Crofts, Ross Trevor and yet again yesterday Laytown. How many more incidents need to occur within these private care homes before our Minister for Health realises that care needs to be provided by professional, educated staff with proper standards and conditions in place to prevent the huge turnover of staff which occurs. We also need to implement proper staff patient ratios in elderly care and indeed in all areas of healthcare. HIQUA has been set up to improve standards in our nursing homes, both private and public. HIQUA on inspection of these homes do not look at staffing education or staff patient ratios. Dr O'Reilly continues to remind us nurses that work in HSC Elder Care Facilities how much more expensive it is to provide care for residents in public units rather than privately run facilities. Mary Harney's baby when she was Minister for Health was to privatise elder care. Dr O'Reilly as the old saying goes penny wise pound foolish. A lot can be learnt in health from this saying. Please support the Motion.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Delegate.

Tracey Osment, UNITE

Tracey Osment, UNITE. We're going to be supporting the Motion and we need to be quite selfish on this Motion because without being too flippant looking around the room

there might be some of us that need to be in a home where your only guarantee that we are going to be looked after and I'm not looking at anyone in particular. But we're supporting the Motion by actively pursuing a risk based policy with the Government that must include the following. Public protection through licensing or registration of qualified health care attendant or health care workers involved in the provision of direct personal care. Mandatory regulation and policing of private contractors working in health care services. It's not an option, it's essential for the elderly, those in the ID sector and anyone who else we advocate for as carers so that the public patients and service users can be safe, and finally the listing of the employment moratorium by the HSC. It's counterproductive and ignores the reality that outsourcing privatisation and filling vacancies through agencies is putting lives at risk. Support the motion.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you.

Padraig Mulholland, NIPSA

Chair, Conference Padraig Mulholland from NIPSA to speak and support Motion 23 and I'm going to only make a couple of short points. I think this is a critically important motion.

First of all it deals with an issue that faces a huge section of our population both north and south in the immediate future. It is an area of service that is under attack by the brutal administrations we have both North and South who are attacking public services and as an area of the struggle as we as a movement cannot walk away from. I think it's an excellent motion because it hits the key points. It make the most important points that can be made on this issue. First of all it makes the point that the place which the elderly should be cared for is in the public service. They should not be put at the mercy of profiteers. They should be cared for in the public service.

Secondly it makes the point that you cannot have decent public services based on low pay and bad terms and conditions. Good services go hand in hand with good conditions, not the other way around. And that is an important point for us emphasise as well to both the administrations North and South.

And thirdly, it ties those issues together and makes the point, our movement is not the movement that is going to trade services in exchange for terms and conditions or jobs. We fight on all those issues together. We build our movement together on those issues. Defend all services, make sure they are available to the whole population. Defend all jobs and defend all terms and conditions of employment. Comrades, I would call on you to support this Motion but do more than that, go out defend our services, defend terms and conditions. Those who don't want to walk away and leave it to us who do want to fight. Support the Motion.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Delegate. Now are there any further speakers offering on those Motions? Is there anyone offering to speak on Section 5, Chapter 2 and Appendix 7 of the Report? No one offering?

So I'm going to put those motions to the floor. Motion 21 in the name of the PSEU in relation to the Public Sector Agreement all those in favour please show? All those against? I declare the motion carried.

Motion 22 in the name of the CPSU on a Tax and Public Servants all those in favour please show? All those against? Abstentions. Sorry I didn't call abstentions on Motion 21. Well lets deal with Motion 22 first. Abstentions on Motion 22? I declare the Motion carried.

Now revert to Motion 21 just for the record. Abstentions on Motion 21. There are abstentions. So the Motion is carried with a number of abstentions. Apologies Delegates.

Motion 23 all those in favour please show? All those against? And abstentions. I declare the Motion carried. And Motion 24 in the name of the IBOA all those in favour please show. All those against? Abstentions. I declare the motion carried.

And then on the Principle Report, Section 5, Chapter 2 and Appendix 7 all those in favour of adoption? All those against? Abstentions. I declare the sections of the Report adopted.

And now I'm very tempted to invite Standing Orders so that we could do something with the time. You'll pay for it tomorrow Delegates that's the only thing.

I just want to announce that we've been advised that the Fringe Meeting in relation to the Sean Garland Extradition issue will now take place at the earlier time of 7 o'clock rather than 7:30pm as originally scheduled, and that meeting is taking place in the Mangerton Suite in this Hotel here at 7 O'clock. That's the Sean Garland Extradition Meeting is now at 7 O'clock here in the Mangerton Suite.

Other than that Delegates I want to thank you for your cooperation earlier today and I want to thank the Vice Presidents for the way they managed to move the agenda on in my absence. I understand it's Patricia, and I want to urge you Delegates please to assemble at 9:25am so that we can start our business here at 9:30am in the morning and we can get home before midnight tomorrow. Thank you Delegates.

Wednesday 6 July Morning Session

Jack O'Connor, President

We'll get the final day of our proceedings underway. So I declare today's session open and I understand we're going to start with another piece of film so take your seats please.

Video playing

Now, so I want to deal with the Section 4 of the Principle Executive Committee Report, The Northern Ireland Report and then to deal with Chapter One Resisting Austerity and Chapter Two the Work of the Northern Ireland Committee and Chapter Three Equality and Solidarity and I wanted to call on Peter Bunting Assistant General Secretary to introduce the Northern Ireland debate.

Oh sorry Michael, my apologies. When I was speaking to my daughter this morning, she's only fourteen, everyone thinks I'm her Grandfather but ... I was telling her what a deplorable day I had yesterday and she said to me don't worry Daddy she said something good will happen today, and I was looking forward in anticipation for this something good and I walked out of the hotel across the way and it was lashing rain and somebody sitting in a bus called me and said we are going over to the Conference so that's the good that happened today. So Michael, my apologies. Michael Sharp, Chair of Standing Orders. Mike?

Michael Sharpe, Chairperson Standing Orders Committee

That's not a good omen to what I have to say but however. Michael Sharpe, Chair Standing Orders presenting SOC Report No. 5, a verbal report.

First of all in relation to the elections which are to take place Pat Hardiman of Galway Trades Council has withdrawn from the election for the Trades Council's seat. Now the ballot papers will still show his name because it hasn't been possible to print new ones. So in casting your ballots just ignore Pat Hardiman's name and if anybody does happen to put a preference against it the Scrutineers will simply ignore that and move onto the next one, but Pat Hardiman is not a candidate.

In relation to the elections generally, ballot papers will be available from 10 O'clock onwards and in the Standing Orders Committee Room which is up the stairs on the first floor. That will be doubling as a polling station and it will be possible for Delegates to go there and exchange credential cards for their ballot papers. I would remind you of the procedure which you have already agreed in an earlier report, that each affiliate is expected to appoint a Principle Delegate who will go and collect their ballot papers with all the credential cards from that affiliate. The ballot will then be open until 1 o'clock and all ballot papers must be returned if you want them counted, they must be returned by 1 o'clock when the ballot will close and the Scrutineers will then start work and have result later this afternoon. Could I remind you also that An Tánaiste is due to address

conference immediately after lunch, so please be back promptly in your seats in deference to that.

Thirdly we have an emergency motion submitted by a number of unions on the issues of the sabotage of the Irish Ship to Gaza. SOC has accepted that, it will be printed and circulated and we are recommending that it be taken after Motion 40 this afternoon.

Now in relation to the morning business, as the President has indicated we will be starting the Northern Ireland Report. Unfortunately we don't have either of the possible speakers either Peter Upton or Martin McGuinness with us. So that will mean that that the allocation of time for that report we will probably not use it all. So we'll be moving straight to the things that are scheduled to begin at twenty to eleven, we will probably be moving to those before that so please be alerted to that.

Now I would stress there is a lot of business to get through this morning and we don't want to have a situation where things fall of the agenda. Sr Stanislov Kennedy is coming as a guest speaker to speak to us shortly before lunch and we want to get through everything that is scheduled before that because it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to reschedule anything for this afternoon. We already have a full programme scheduled for that so we don't want to be here all night.

So I would stress again the points that we made in the earlier Standing Orders Report No. 1, which you accepted, where we request affiliates to confine themselves to one speaker on a particular motion which would mean that the motion is moved, formally seconded and any subsequent speakers from other affiliates would in large measure confine themselves to matters speaking against the motion. We don't want a whole succession of speeches in favour of a particular motion. Obviously there will be points to be raised, matters of urgency to be raised in relation to motions and one doesn't want to curtail those but if we're to get through the business we will have to proceed efficiently and effectively with that. If we can do that Standing Orders Committee is confident that we will be able to get through all the business this morning and that is our intention and we hope your intention as well.

That President is essentially the Standing Orders Committee Report that if I could just indulge you for a moment. As I said I would hope this would be my last report to this Conference and assuming that it is it would also be last report to any conference because as some of you will know I am no longer going forward for re-election to the Standing Orders Committee having been on it for a number of years and in this position for a number of years so since this is I hope my last report I would like to just make a few thanks particularly to this years' committee and previous committees on which have worked with me, to you President and your predecessors and the various members of the Executive Councils over the years, to the Congress staff, particularly Liam Berney, our hardworking Secretary who keeps us all straight and not least to you the Delegates and the Delegates at all the previous Conferences for your cooperation and good humour and keeping in line with our recommendations and making sure that conference is the productive even that I believe it to be. So thank you for that President. I formally move SOC 5.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Michael. Is there a seconder? Seconder? Formally seconded. Are there speakers? Okay.

Patricia McKeown, UNISON

President, Delegates, I want some clarification from Chair Standing Orders before we move to accept this report. There are a number of Motions that have got speakers seconding and that includes Executive Council speakers. I do think on the basis of the time we have used so far in this conference we're not really in danger of running out of time. And I want to know are we about to take a decision that will cancel all seconders, including those who are about to second the motion on the north from the Executive Council.

Michael Sharp, Chairperson, Standing Orders Committee

Just to clarify that that I did stress when I was presenting SOC 1 that that was a request and I stress again, it is a request. There is no intention to stop people speaking where if there are speakers who have prepared speeches. I'm just saying wherever possible we would ask people to try to get through the business and to second formally wherever possible. So that's clarification. There's certainly no intention to stifle debate but we do have a lot of business to get through and if we don't get through it things will fall of the agenda and it's going to be very difficult to reschedule them. So that's the clarification on that. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Michael. Now the Report has been moved and seconded and clarified. All those in favour please show? All those against? I declare Standing Orders Report No. 5 carried as clarified and just in relation to Michael's remarks, I'm a bit reluctant Michael to acknowledge what you said because I wouldn't be sanguine about the possibility of the necessity of you being required to come to the platform again. So I'll reserve my remarks until the closing moments, if I get that far.

I want to call now on Peter Bunting to introduce the Northern Ireland Debate. Peter.

Peter Bunting, Assistant General Secretary

Chair, Conference, Comrades I am introducing the Northern Ireland section of the Executive Council Report at a time when working people face threats of a nature and intensity unseen for generations. Against this drumbeat of cuts and austerity the Trade Union Movement in Northern Ireland has remained united and steadfast against the plans of the Tories and the liberal parties and the liberal enablers. Thousands have attended public rallies in all of our major towns and cities. Northern Ireland Committee of Congress and our affiliates have produced leaflets, posters, magazines and booklets, not only announcing the cuts but arguing the case for realistic and just alternatives to austerity.

As a movement we have enjoyed other successes reaching into the membership of the unions to ensure that workplaces are more safe, more informed and more intrusive. The Union Learning Programme has reached people who were let down by the formal education system and would never have re-entered the world of learning without the encouragement of Union Learning Reps and I am happy to report that this unique access to workers through the Trade Union Movement has been recognised. Funding for Union

Learning has been secured for the next three years and will build upon the impressive figures achieved through recent years. 97.3% of targets were reached, almost 6 thousand workers have benefited from courses ranging from essential skills to languages, to MVQ's to Open University. We have been active in other forms of workplace education, raising the profile of health and safety week and the annual Workers Memorial Day. Our Equality and Human Rights Programme is ensuring that these issues remain simple to workers despite the official neglect by Government of the Bill of Rights and the Shared Future.

As well as traditional methods of reaching the minds of our members about the effects of the economy and the causes for which we fight, the Northern Ireland Congress Youth Committee has been particularly active of informing younger workers including those not active in unions about our cause. They have been adept at using social media and have made essential links with the range of Youth Organisations and Students Unions.

The Congress Migrant Support workers unit has established it self as a vital resource for migrants for many States. Many of whom have never had the opportunity to join a trade union and are often victims of appalling discrimination and exploitation. In the past year alone the two staff at the unit have assisted over three hundred migrant workers. These hard lessons have inspired a major new educational leaflet on the myths that fuel racism. Copies of these and other Congress publications are available at the Congress desk outside. This work like that of the education and equality units, like the youth committee and other committees, spread through example at all levels of society the core principles of this movement, equality, diversity and solidarity. These core principles form the spine of our resistance to the mean spirited agenda of the Tories and their enablers. We have allies in this fight, new groups of citizens who did not feature in previous trade union protests and campaigns. Using methods and technologies which are novel and can be at times perplexing to their allies as much as to their enemies, but I'm glad they are on our side. We are gaining allies because the analysis we have brought to the debate has been proved right again and again. We have long warned that the economic policies of successive Governments were leading to greater inequalities of wealth and income and it is clear that such disparities are at record highs. The fact is that we have in Great Britain and Northern Ireland two economies running in parallel lines and never crossing. We have an economy of austerity cuts which effect the poorest, hardest and are squeezed in the middle of both ends. Inflation fuelled by commodity speculators is squeezing the middle and low earners and the young are facing the real threat of never being able to match living standards of their parents.

For most workers social mobility has stopped and is in face regressing under the regime of neoliberalism. Then there is the other economy. The Institute for Fiscal Studies reports that last year incomes among the top 1% grew at the fastest rate in the decade. According to the Sunday Times Rich List the top one thousand are sixty billion pounds better off this year than in 2010, bringing their collective wealth close to the record prerecession levels.

Our report from the High Pay Commission reveals that the FUTSI 100 one hundred Chief Executives are on an average paid 4.2 million annually or a one hundred and forty five times the medium wage. And most of the stinking rich feel no obligation to pay their taxes. That is what the Tories mean by the UK being open for business, open for Vodafone to negotiate a tax bill of 6 billion down to 1.2 billion, open for Goldman Sachs to not pay

over 10 million pound in tax owed, open for private equity firm to buy Boots The Chemist, and relocate to Zurich in Switzerland, cheating the tax payer of at least 250 million pounds per annum. With this mendacity deemed okay by those who govern us and those who inform us through the corporate media, it should not be surprising that the powers that be have decided that the best future for Northern Ireland is for us to become a tax haven.

There have been acres of newsprint about the virtues of cutting corporation tax. It is presented as simple equation. Lower taxes on business means that more jobs will be created. It seemed like a done deal as far as the experts were concerned and the political class swallowed it. Four years ago when this campaign was started with the backing of the largest media conglomerate on this Island, the Trade Union Movement was the only stakeholder in the economy which pointed out that this particular emperor was wearing few clothes. Now we are faced with the Secretary of State, Owen Paterson who is determined to make Northern Ireland a long shore tax haven. His top priority in recent weeks has been to cajole as many local business people to positively respond to the treasuries consultation on cutting corporation tax. We have damaged this particular gilded ship campaigning for a huge cut for the 4% of businesses big enough to pay the full rate of corporation tax. It is unclear if they have been held below the waterline, time will tell, so also will the European Courts who may have their own view on the political interference from the Secretary of State.

What ought to be abundantly clear is where real political influence lies in Northern Ireland. Our political class reassures us that they will not be swayed by violence. Good. However the debating corporation tax has revealed what sways their actions and who sways their thinking.

And I wish at this stage to particularly condemn those parties in Northern Ireland who attract their votes from large swathes of working people and particularly Sinn Féin and the DUP and the SDLP again who portray themselves as left wing political groups who work on behalf of the working class in Northern Ireland, and each and every one of those parties is for corporation tax.

Such an insider's view was expressed recently by Kate Barker, the Chairperson of the Economic Advisory Group which doles out allegedly impartial and independent advice to the Northern Ireland Executive. Kate Barker claimed that and I quote "*There should be no mechanism put in place to stop companies retaining the savings or paying them back to shareholders as dividends rather than reinvesting in the economy*". That spells it out loud and clear. The interest of corporation tax and the only trust it's going to have is to increase the profits for the shareholders and the business people and will not be reinvested in the Northern Ireland economy.

A huge cut in corporation tax will not guarantee a single new job. Now I'm not just saying that, the Chairman of the CBI in Northern Ireland, in giving evidence to the Northern Act Select Affairs Committee, when pressed by lady Silvia Herman stated that he couldn't guarantee the corporation tax, when it was used in Northern Ireland would create one new additional job. It will guarantee, however, big increases in profits, for large businesses, including banks who are in the processes of laying off workers. The only other consequence that we can be sure of is that hundreds of millions more will be cut from

public services and investment and procurement. It is a straight transfer of wealth from the least well off to the richest in Northern Ireland society and by the way there's no stealth even required in this. Almost every spokesperson from that campaign will materially benefit from this transfer as company directors or as tax consultants.

Now let us look at a parallel campaign for an item for which most political parties including the ones I mentioned once supported, which is part of the Good Friday Agreement and which is supported by the public every time there's a vox-pop done with them. What happened to the Bill of Rights? Why was it stymied and stopped? In whose interest was it for us not to have a Bill of Rights? Where was the Bill of Rights in the recent election to the Northern Ireland Assembly, or indeed the General Election last year? Why are those parties which said that they backed the Bill of Rights so silent now?

The case where the comprehensive Bill of Rights was side-lined and derided when mentioned at all. It was portrayed as a far left plot to tie the hand of the Government and hand huge powers to others. It advocates were parried as out of touch academics and strange special interest vehicles containing subspecies as feminists and Trade Unionists. The people who matter in our political economy, the premier Secretariat at the top of the British Civil Service, the quangocracy, the lobbyist with the largest and big business people and foreign investors, the UK Treasury and finally the Northern Ireland Executive decided that the Bill of Rights was not in their interest and therefore not in our interest either.

We can hold occasional protests at the steps of Stormont but we need to remember the rich march in Stormont every day and they don't need banners or thousands to wave them, just a phone call will do to ensure that the right consensus is reached between the DUP and Sinn Féinn and the correct advice is offered to the respective Ministers. It is our duty not to let the campaign for a meaningful Bill of Rights wither and die. It is not a choice. It is an obligation under an international treaty that 85% of the people on this island voted for. Our campaign for a Bill of Rights has not been dropped and it is connected to the wider campaign for social justice and against an ideology of socialism for the richest 1% and the free market for the rest of us. We will continue to fight for sensible and fairer means of expanding the private sector by promoting investment and research and development, by rewarding innovation, by generating quality jobs in manufacturing and services, and by encouraging exports. We are at the heart of the campaign for agreeing new deals and are constantly promoting uptake of EU programmes, such as the Globalisation Adjustment Fund. We are working with some of the very organisations which the Tories would like to coopt to their plans for outsourcing welfare and other public services to the rhetoric of the big society. We work with these community and voluntary groups because they have more in common with our ethos than the market media of the Tories.

We must encourage and work with those who are working with people for whom trade unions do not matter, people living in deprived areas where four out of five adults are not in paid employment. Likewise we are working with the students unions with their campaigns against tuition fees, cuts in student numbers and the abolition of the Educational Maintenance Allowance. But we have to reach deeper than superficially ideological analysis to identify solutions. And the people we have to convince most of all are our own members. Most trade union members vote in Northern Ireland and the fact is that most

vote for parties whose common priority is usually not the economy. We have had ten or twelve rallies over the last two years against austerity cuts and for the protection of jobs in both the private and public sector and thousands have participated in those rallies and protests. These are not protests of choice, no more than the peace rallies which we have posted too often are protests of choice. Just as the options being discussed for coordinated industrial action by most of our members and affiliates in the public sector are actions, not of choice, but of grim necessity. Grim necessity forced us yet again to take to the streets to provide a safe and non-partisan platform for citizens of all views and opinions to express their abhorrence of murder of Police Officer Ronan Kerr and to express our support for his family and his colleagues. The perpetrators of this foul deed deserve our contempt and our condemnation but we also have a duty to our younger citizens to be honest about the past and to explain our determination never to go back there. For that reason we can condemn those perpetrators but we cannot shun them and we ought to support those people of good will who will engage with anybody if it means that others can walk without fear.

The primary right is the right to life. No worker should ever have to fear for their life or the life of their family. Nobody has the right to use fear or violence any worker, that is not negotiable. We all want a better and more inclusive society and to build that better place we require these pillars of democracy, justice and peace and in that justice I refer to social and economic justice as well. In Belfast and in Omagh, and in Derry and Coleraine and Antrim and Newry, local Trade Councils stood up to be counted and created the platform for workers and their families to make clear their abhorrence of the barbarity of murder, the futility of sectarianism and other threats to our peace process.

In the absence of political leadership on building a shared future it is community activists and trade unionists who are making tough choices on cohesion, integration and sharing. The alternative to the vision is what it has always been, the unity of working class people and their families and communities, one society. That is what we are supposed to do because unlike some we have always held that there is such a thing as society. It comprises individuals and families as well neighbours and communities and networks of local groups and workplace associations. The Trade Union Movement has been central to this civil life, a vibrant and dynamic political culture which merges the local with the global. What is being talked about now by the Tories is something else. For all their talk about local empowerment it is becoming clear that this is a ruse to fill the pockets of their friends in big business. When tenders for the work programme were announced last April the bulk of those in multi-billion contracts went to outsourcing merchants Circle and Deloitte with the charities relegated to being subcontractors doing the dirty work of harassing dole claimants while their corporate overseers clean up millions for their Directors and shareholders. All in all well for reforms the big society and localism bill are shaping up to be the biggest bonanza for tax avoiding corporations since the private finance initiative. It is recently emerged that equity transactions in PFI operations are generating huge profits, 66% in the health sector and 55% in the criminal justice sector. And guess what? 90 of the largest PFI operations are now in tax havens so the tax payer is being robbed, again and again and again. This is the Two Economies Theory in daily practice by all means necessary corporations and the wealthiest 1% have shifted the role of the State to be their enabler and their provider and protector. They pay little or nothing in taxation and boast about corporate social responsibility. My colleague Brian Campfield calls it State Monopoly Capitalism. They ensured that they get the cream of the public sector

while demanding cuts for the rest of us. They tell us that we are all in this together while sucking the marrow out of the welfare state. They are corporate welfare junkies who are unfit to lick the shoes of the public servants they denigrate and then they shut down their taxes. Let me put that into the context of the cost of UK taxes which are evaded, avoided or simply uncollected. One hundred and twenty three billion pounds per year it would wipe out any deficit in the United Kingdom. And there is a lesson here for our local political establishment in the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly. The massive transfer of wealth upwards has been matched by the decline in respect and function of elective politicians. The political story of decades is not the devolution of political power downwards but the evaporation of political power upwards. This should be at the very least something which concerns democratic politicians. Sinn Féin, the DUP, the Ulster Unionists, the SDLP, the Alliance Party and those handfuls of independents elected to govern Northern Ireland for the next four years have some choices to make. We can only hope that they choose wisely and that they reject the subterfuge of scams such as the big society, but I doubt that they will. The problem of having two economies has only one solution, one society. One society based on equality, diversity and solidarity and celebrated where every citizen contributes more than money and taxes and receives more back than the mere necessities of existence as defined by the gurus of consumerism. One society where work is valued, where service is a virtue and where democracy is inclusive and the work in progress. Thank you for listening. I commend the Northern Ireland report here.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Peter and now I want to call on the mover on Motion 25 in the name of the Executive Council who is the Vice President Eugene McGlone, shortly incidentally to become President.

Eugene McGlone, Vice President

President, Congress, Comrades, Guests, Eugene McGlone, UNITE moving Motion 25 standing in the name of the Executive Council.

Conference, this Motion before you calls for three distinct actions. Firstly but quite rightly calls for us to condemn the brutal murder of Ronan Kerr and I know that we have all already done so and I know that we all stand united in our condemnation of this most recent aberration of our bloody past. And I also know that there are many here who are among the thousands who turned out in Belfast at a rally called by the Northern Ireland Committee of Congress, referred to by Peter, to show our solidarity with Ronan's family and friends and our disgust at the evil act that was perpetrated. The rally that was called in Belfast was addressed by the Vice Chair of the Northern Ireland Committee, Pamela Dooley and I have to say that was a difficult enough task for her, make more difficult by the fact that Ronan's mother is a member of UNISON and that means she's a member of our family. And that solidarity rally, more by accident than perhaps by design, took place at the very time that Ronan was being lowered into his grave. So let me remind you Conference that it was exactly three months ago to the day, this day. Ronan was buried on the 6th of April and this is now the 6th of July. I'm supposing the intervening three months an awful lot may have seemed to have happened, for some it certainly does, but it also seems to be a long way away but I think we can be certain that for Ronan and his family and his friends it's as close and as raw as it ever was.

As Peter pointed out, we recognise that the sole intention of the brutality of this act and other acts of violence that preceded it and acts of violence which followed it including the shooting of an NUJ member on the Newtonards Road recently. Had but one purpose and the purpose is to create a situation where law and order and the rule of decency no longer applies, to create space where people can exploit others for their own small and immediate ends. Conference we've had all this before and we have to say that we're not prepared to subject the next generation to much more of the same. This must stop. These sort of actions, in any circumstances be seen to enjoy any support from any section or segment of our society. Over the course of the past two weeks some of you will have noted that the historical enquiries team have made reports on two older atrocities, The Kings Mill and the Loughan Island Massacres. They are timely reminders of what can happen if we're not watchful. Conference I would ask you to reflect for a moment on just precisely what the impact of Ronan Kerr had on our society and as I say to you it created not just the usual symbols that in previous years might have been created to show who we oppose this or how we oppose that particular action or what side we were on. But it created in my mind one of the most powerful symbols that I have witnessed during the course of our recent and bloodied history. And that was the symbol of the PSNI carrying a call of their colleague and then in turn the same call being carried by other colleagues of Ronan's in the GAA. I think that if I'm allowed to paraphrase Seamus Heaney that even in watching this we all shouldered the kind of manhood stepping out to lift Ronan's coffin.

And I would say to you, not only was that remarkable but perhaps just every bit is remarkable have been some of the subsequent events, in particular I refer to the recent visit of Queen Elizabeth II to this State. Who in their wildest imagination could have dreamt of the situation where the reigning monarch from Britain could turn up in Dublin at the Garden of Remembrance in Parnell Square, lay a wreath and bow to the memory of the people who attempted to drive her Grandfather's rule from Ireland in 1916? That for me was a demonstration of maturity, not only on part of the reigning monarch from the United Kingdom but also in the way that it was generously received by the State here in the Republic, and that sort of maturity and that sort of reaction I think was what we also saw during the parade in the immediate aftermath of Ronan's murder.

The second part of the motion in front of you Conference calls quite simply for us to reaffirm our commitment to achieve political progress through democratic mandate, of democratic mandate and mandate means only and only through people who enjoy a mandate is the people of the Island of Ireland. And perhaps the saddest thing we should reflect upon in this aspiration is that even within both jurisdictions, notwithstanding the fact that there is a Coalition Government here, there is not a political institution in the Island in par that represents us to workers. But we now have seen a firm commitment to peaceful political progress by the main protagonists in the North and in acceptance of that firmly within the Republic. We've seen people in both States, whom we previously could not have imagined, could sit down together to discuss political progress, sharing space in Dáil Éireann, sharing space around the cabinet table in the Executive in Northern Ireland and sharing responsibility for the day to day economic management or indeed maybe mismanagement of our economic affairs. This, Conference, not only welcomes it, it calls for us to reaffirm our commitment but we're not separate from it. We are Congress an organic part of the body politic. It's us who should be the people who carry the responsibility for ensuring that the political needs of our constituent memberships are met in the political arena. We had a debate two years ago in Tralee about increasing the

influence of the movement within the Irish Labour Party. It's now time in my view that we had a debate about creating the left of centre party in Northern Ireland that what would complement the work of the Irish Labour and indeed the work of the British Labour Parties. A party that would be responsible to and for the workers in Northern Ireland and that will reflect the left of centre views of Trade Unions and present an alternative economic set of values that our people can engage with. But that's not the function of this Motion. The function of the Motion is merely to say that we reaffirm our position in respect of the mandate of the people for purely democratic developments in both jurisdictions of the Island but that doesn't mean that we can't hope, that we can't dream, and we can't work for something better.

The third element of the motion, Congress, calls on us to strive for and to seek a better life for all workers. Now that may well sound a wee bit airy fairy and a wee bit aspirational and a wee bit 1970's, however, it's a real requirement and it's real simply by virtue of the fact that it's now becoming quite apparent, even to the most cynical citizens, that no section of our community can live in this Island in glorious isolation. There's some excellent examples of joint economic activity, such as the cancer screening unit of Alt Na Gelvin that will solve an awful lot of problems for people in the Northwest irrespective of whether they are in Northern Ireland or in the Republic of Ireland.

And this motion calls upon us Conference to pursue an inclusive island-wide economic economy, which is premised on social economic rights for the citizens and that means equality, and that means ensuring equality, and that means working for equality, and that means this is a difficult task, but we have to do it. And certainly it's fair to say that there are ongoing developments in regard to this.

You only need to look at the report that Peter has outlined in great detail, contained in Section 4. It outlines the work of the Northern Ireland Committee and the work that they've undertaken in the past two years. Congress and Northern Ireland and you can hear it in Peter's report, it's vibrant. Congress and Northern Ireland continues to work towards achieving it seems its goals and it does that despite adverse conditions that we labour in. There are and will remain for some considerable time some basic economic differences and example of this as Peter pointed out is the attitude towards corporation tax. In Northern Ireland we certainly not dealing with the same set of circumstances that prevail here in the Republic. It's a different tax regime and there a different basic fiscal requirements. But anyone who thinks that by simply reducing corporation tax in Northern Ireland would bring us El Dorado are fooling nobody but themselves. Of course casualty of this approach, as Peter pointed out, will be the front line public services, sacrificed as a windfall tax rebate for the rich.

And can I attract your attention to page 52 of the report, under Section 4? Peter has a reference into it to the Secretary of State, Eoin Patterson, who's talking about corporation tax and the reduction of it and how he thinks it will bring benefits to us. And he said relating it to the radicalisation of the young people in our society, he said that the radicalisation of teenagers in Northern Ireland can't be counted by just policing, it had to be tackled economically. Now I don't think there is anyone in this hall who would say that's the wrong approach in terms of tackling economic deprivation in particular working class estates within Northern Ireland. But I don't believe that the British Government are going to bring a big bag of money to solve the economic problems that are so clearly in

existence within these areas in Northern Ireland. What Eoin Patterson is suggesting is not that they will bring a bag of money but they will reduce corporation tax and everything will work out wonderful. It's a crucial part of his Government's strategy that he thinks that the most deprived areas will benefit from this corporation tax, not the employers, not business, not the multimillionaires but the kids who are joyriding. I have to say I don't understand him. The problem that I found and the thing I found most nauseating about these comments that he made, was that he made these within a day or two of the murder of Ronan Kerr. Now what was he linking the murder of Ronan Kerr to deprivation and radicalisation for? I just don't understand. And I think that I do certainly miss the creative time whenever we had successive Secretaries of State in Northern Ireland who actually cared about us, or at least demonstrated some interest. Chair, the challenge contained in this Motion and the challenge that confronts Northern Ireland in terms of the economy, in terms of industrial relations, in terms of trying to secure the equality of opportunity across the board. It's a long and arduous task, it's a task that requires real commitment, it's a task that requires real dedication, it's a task that requires proper political perspectives and in the three short paragraphs in this motion before you it encompasses all of those aspirations. Conference I ask you not only to endorse the motion, I ask you to work for its fulfilment. **I** move.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Eugene and Anne Speed now to second on behalf of the Executive Council.

Anne Speed, SIPTU

President, Delegates on seconding this Motion on behalf of the Executive Council I want to point out that the Motion clearly lays out commitments to deliver on working to enhance the peace process and building momentum to achieve social and economic rights for all the people of Northern Ireland. The challenges as Eugene has laid out are great and the challenges are many. But unfortunately the repeated.....end of tape some text missing.... dividends are coming through. If you see no future you know the tendency is to join someone's army. Our job, our responsibility now, as Trade Unionists is to build the army of the labour movement, provide hope and build confidence that we can resist exploitation, achieve real change and secure real human rights. Give the absence of jobs, a continuing slide in educational attainment, widening in equality, deepening poverty, the immense attack on frontline public services and the withdrawal of funding commitments by the Lib Dem Government and Tory coalition of funding commitments in the Good Friday Agreement is no surprise that history is being repeated. Social and economic deprivation were amongst the most significant drivers during the long years of conflict on these islands. For these reasons I believe it was so important that David Begg took the opportunity to call on Taoiseach Enda Kenny to encourage the British Government to reinstate their funding agreements under the Good Friday Agreement. And that outgoing President, Jack O'Connor, emphasised the importance of strategies to build and deepen all island, organising, solidarity, and political momentum in support of the peace process. So Delegates, we have to put real actions behind our commitment in this Motion which as Eugene has emphasised is to pursue the achievement of an inclusive island wide dynamic economy premised on social, real social and economic rights. And this means that Congress has to first of all resource the North South group to advance this work. It has to ensure that the economic unit is mandated to develop these proposals, to build all Island economic advance and we all have to accept a key responsibility to step up our campaign for a bill of rights, not only in the north of the island but across the whole of the two

jurisdictions. We trade unionists across this island have to take ownership of the fight to advance to a real peace with real justice and equality. So delegates in the call to action yesterday discussed by all of us, mandating the incoming Executive to take a new direction, I am confident that it will be clearly grounded on this and other motions calling for all island fight back and all island solidarity and a strong all island trade union movement. Thank you. I move.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Anne and before I call speakers I just want to acknowledge the presence of a number of people in the hall.

I want first of all to acknowledge the presence of Michael D Higgins. It's well known of course that Michael has been selected to contest the Office of the Presidency of the Republic of Ireland. But it's also well known of course that he has been a voice of the left on this island and particularly in this Republic for more than 40 years. It's also well known that he was a very successful minister for arts and culture and managed to prove something which wasn't believed until then, that there were thousands of jobs to be made in the field of culture and Michael D Higgins ensured not only that there were jobs but that they were good jobs and that in most cases they were trade union jobs as well. But what is not known to everyone is that Michael D Higgins is also a proud trade union activist. A man who knows what it's like to front for a trade union, a man who knows what it's like to be on strike, a man who knows what it's like to lead a battle for recognition and a man who knows what it's like to run the risk of losing his job and depriving his family of an income in order to make a stand for the right to organise. That's not generally known but that's what Michael D Higgins had to do many years ago in the University in Galway and we welcome him here as a trade unionist and as a voice of the left.

I also want to acknowledge the presence here of a number of guests and I neglected doing so yesterday because I was trying to wait until most of them at least were in the hall and I can't actually identify the people up on the platform. There's a light projecting onto us here and I better do it before they are all gone. I want to first of all to acknowledge the presence of a number of members of the Labour Court. The Chairman Kevin Duffy and the Deputy Chair Caroline Jenkinson and Jack Nash and Jerry Shanahan and I want to acknowledge their presence here and Brendan Hayes as well. I didn't see Brendan here. My apologies to Brendan, not that's he's taken for granted, I actually didn't see him here. I want to acknowledge as well the presence here of Kieran Mulvey the Chairman of the LRC, and I think it would be appropriate that we extend a warm welcome to them in the traditional way. I want as well to extend a warm welcome to Mike Kirby the President of the Scottish Trade Union Congress, who is here along with the General Secretary of that Congress, Graham Smith and to Martin Mansfield the General Secretary of the Wales Trade Union Congress and we have developed a very close, warm, fraternal working relationship with these congresses as has been stated here at this Conference and indeed at last conference and I'd like Delegates if you would extend a warm welcome to them as well.

I want to acknowledge the presence here as well of a number of past Presidents and previous Officers and members of the Executive Committee of this Congress. I've only identified a few of them and I mean no offence to others who might be here who I actually haven't identified but the former president Christy Kirwan was here yesterday. I

don't know if Christy is still here today. Jim McCusker is still here today and of course Peter McLoone who addressed Conference yesterday and is very active participant at this conference and I would like if you would extend a warm welcome to them as well.

And finally if I may be permitted to do so, I want to acknowledge the presence here of a former member of the General Purposes Committee and Treasurer and prominent figure in the Trade Union Movement for many years, Bill Attley And I just want to say if I may because I won't get a chance to say it again that it's Bill Attley's fault that I am here because were it were not for the support he extended to many times, at crucial times and were it not for the fact that he refrained from sacking me a number of times, when he could have sacked me I would not be here. And I want to acknowledge the fact that he supported me, notwithstanding the fact that we had differences and we were quite clear about the differences that we had and he supported me despite that fact that we have differences. I don't know, only the record of history will tell whether or not he did a good thing for the Trade Union and Labour Movement by not exercising the discretion he had on one or two occasions another way but I want to acknowledge his presence here because he contributed enormously in so many ways to the Trade Union Movement for so many years. Bill Attley who's up in the (applause). So he's the man who's to blame.

I want now Delegates and I apologise to the speakers who I was afraid I guess would leave and then I would be talking when they weren't here so it allowed you time to fine tune your speeches so you'll be able to stay within standing orders at least.

Liam Gallagher, UNITE

President, Conference, Liam Gallagher, UNITE. I can assure you my speech will be brief.

I would like to explain Peter's Report. I think he has very comprehensively laid out the difficulties which have been faced in Northern Ireland. I would like to touch on two points. One is the great debate we all accept and agree with the analysis of the Programme for Government in Northern Ireland. No one would dispute the high dependence on the public sector, the weak private sector. However, I mean the figures given are 32% of the block grant goes towards public funding but it has to be remembered that 27% of that grant also goes towards the private sector. The problem with Northern Ireland is not an over dependence or strong public sector. The problem is a weak private sector. We have to get growth and we have to grow jobs. You will not do that by taking £4 billion out of the economy over the next four years and that's what's been proposed.

The second point is in relation to the dissident violence in the North. We have situation and rightly Eugene eloquently pointed out the tragedy of the death of Ronan Kerr. But we've also had three bombs recently in my city, in Derry. We had one on the Strand Road, one on Culmore Road and one lately at Santander and people were very very luck on those occasions. Now the point I want to make is this, that if you take 4 billion pounds out of an economy and you create a situation where you have a lost generation, there are 60 thousand people currently on the live register in Northern Ireland as unemployed. A massive group of economically dependent people or inactive people, now if you look at that situation and the growing trends and youth unemployment and would someone for example in Craigan and someone in Belfast could get 600 hundred votes as a Dissident Republican, I think that's a warning to all of us. I think it's also a warning to Government that while the peace is there and we all fought hard to get that peace, don't be

complacent. If you have economic deprivation and areas of social or social disadvantage you will lay the foundations where these groups will grow and they will find future cannon-fodder and it is a stark reminder to all of us to do something about it.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Delegate.

Thomas Mahaffy, UNISON

Chair, Delegates, Thomas Mahaffy from UNISON supporting the Motion and speaking to the Northern Ireland section of the report on the Northern Ireland Bill of Rights. And also on the Board of the Human Rights Consortium a campaigning organisation to which ICTU, UNISON and other unions remain affiliated.

We were all relieved when political agreement was finally reached on the devolution of policing and justice last year. This was one of the core commitments in the Good Friday Agreement. It is clear that the UK Government and many of our local politicians believe that the final piece of the Agreement jigsaw is now in place. It isn't. The missing piece of the jigsaw remains the full implementation of the Statutory Equality Duty and a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland. Not only is this a core aim of the Trade Union Movement, it is the opinion of vast majority of the people from all communities in Northern Ireland. Even some of their political parties have shamelessly taken an opposition stance. In stark opposition the Government lies in spin, research from the Human Rights Consortium has shown that 95% of all responses to the most recent NIO consultation support a strong and inclusive Bill that contains social economic rights. Despite this the British Government seem committed to killing a Bill for the North. It is also likely that the Irish Government will follow suit ensuring that the Ireland Charter of Rights never gets off the ground, regardless of the recent joint statement on this issue were the two human rights commissions North and South.

The persistence of Government on some political parties in ignoring all the work done by unions in civic society over the past 20 years is unacceptable. The Bill of Rights is a list of fundamental rights that everyone is entitled to enjoy. The right health, education, the right to work, the decent paying conditions, the housing, to a decent environment, and the rights of workers to organising strike, these rights which would protect and benefit the whole community are what we need if we were to sweep away the greed of the past.

As a movement we must continue to encourage public interest and support for Northern Ireland Bill of Rights and all Ireland Charter of Rights. We must continue to build bottom up pressure on our local politicians. Above all we must continue to send a very clear signal to Government that we will not tolerate anything less than what the people were promised in the Good Friday Agreement. We're saying today that the campaign continues. Please support the Motion.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Delegate. Speaker?

Paddy Mackell, Belfast Trades Council

President, Brothers and Sisters, Comrades, Paddy Mackell, Belfast Trades Council, speak and support of this motion.

In supporting the motion I would caution against what could appear as a somewhat labour-simplistic commentary and what is wrong with Northern society or what lies behind the acts of violence. The sole aim of that violence, in my opinion, is not to return society to conflict. It might be one of the aims, it might even be a significant aim, but to dismiss those dissident groups into simplistic terms is to risk repeating the problems of the past. There is an overwhelming desire for peaceful society but as you have seen in recent months with the murder of Ronan Kerr and the continuing sectarian violence and division in the community, a mandate for peace is not enough nor is solely the function of normal democratic Government. Whilst accepting that a dynamic economy premised on social and economic rights for all citizens is a laudable aspiration, it ignores the fundamental failure of the peace process over seventeen years to address those economic wastelands found in the most marginalised communities which breeds fear and resentment and allows an alternative destructive voice to take root.

We in the Trade Union Movement, I think, can sometimes in relation to what is wrong with society in the North, not be a strong a voice as we should be. In the same way the demonstrations in Belfast or Derry will not in themselves defeat the attack on workers through the budget cuts and benefit cuts so neither will platitudes about social and economic rights for citizen do much for that society. The unemployed and the disadvantaged lived in forgotten communities, and that is a fact. On the Shankill Road, when the Eleven Plus was last done, not one person on one occasion passed that Eleven Plus. Don Perris recently produced a report on economic disadvantage in Loyalists communities. It got little coverage and little take up from the main political parties. In East Belfast there has been nothing to replace the key industries long since gone. No one cares; no one cares about the people in the Shankill. In West Belfast there have never been any manufacturing jobs in that community, nor is there likely to be because of the politicians that represent that community. No one cares and it seems that no one has ever cared. A new generation is once again being ignored by wider society unless that is tackled history may well repeat itself. The Trade Union Movement can play a positive and progressive role in moving society in the North to a tolerant place, but I can tell you that meek words in this Motion will do very little to assure those marginalised communities in Armagh or Belfast or Derry that this movement is serious in tackling the wrongs within those communities and breaking the cycle of making the poor and disadvantaged pay for the ills of an unequal society. Conference if a Trade Union Movement is brave and not self-congratulatory we can contribute to a just equal and economically sustainable society. Let's grasp that challenge, work with those communities and be that voice for change, which they so much desire. Please support the motion.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Delegate. And while the next Delegate is approaching the platform I just want to make you aware Delegates, in relation to the elections, that Colm Cronin of Cork Trades Council has withdrawn from the election for the Trades Council Reserve Seat. His name will appear on the ballot paper because the papers have been printed and are circulated but it should be ignored. So repeat Colm Cronin of Cork Trades Council has

withdrawn from the election from the Trades Council Reserve Seat. Now Delegate thank you.

Lucia Collins, NIPSA

Lucia Collins, on behalf of NIPSA to support Motion No. 25.

If ICTU are proposing to put forward such a powerful motion to reaffirm its commitment to achieving political progress through democratic means as mandated by people in Ireland, then they need to refocus their ideological way of thinking and come up with a radical, social and economic alternative. To date the main stream labour movement has often avoided splits by its constant unwillingness to avoid issues of principle and find a lesser common denominator, rather than face confrontation. The fact that most of the movement are agenda driven, short term quick result and self-serving and contempt to keep the unions away from the real left socialist way forward. Their contempt to confine their efforts to populists parliamentary lobbying politics. I've heard praise reeked upon socialists in this room for their diligent work to the Trade Union Movement over many years and if that's the case then they must go to bed at night fighting with the contest that's going on in their heads because all I can see here are right wing neoliberal model of capitalism, much of the same of that I'm all right Jack attitude that will never protect the working class. The Trade Union Movement can find an alternative route to represent the working class people in the North. The Trade Union Movement needs to deal with the issues of state repression sectarianism and parliamentary organisations. The Trade Union Movement needs to present an alternative to the programme of cuts and privatisation of the parliamentary assembly.

Lobbying is not enough. The Trade Union Movement can back this up with a fighting campaign of industrial action and civil disobedience. If the Trade Union Movement does not do this then there are other many unsavoury forces out there willing to fill that vacuum and return us to the conflicts of the past. Trade Union Movement has an opportunity now to do the right thing. Conference please support this motion.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Delegate. Brian?

Brian Compfield, NIPSA

I was going to start off Uachtaran agus a Chairde as Elizabeth II did in Dublin a while ago. I'm speaking President to the section okay.

Thank you very much. Brian Campfield, NIPSA speaking on the Northern Ireland section of the Report.

I just want to focus in on this issues of corporation tax, I mean there' a whole range of other issues and I think the issue of the murder of Ronan Kerr has been well covered as has the potential for Northern Ireland to move back in the more violent history. And let me say that you can never underestimate how things which happened on the ground have the potential of multiplying and interfering with the political progress that has been made. You need to bear that in mind but I want to make a number of points about corporation tax and I want to focus in on the position of Sinn Féin, not because I'm anti Sinn Féin but because Sinn Féin claims to be a socialist organisation, claims the legacy of Connolly and

it claims to stand for the working man and woman. Yet it is certainly in the Northern Ireland jurisdiction one of the cheerleader parties for reduction in corporation tax which is a reduction in the tax for business.

Now I know there is arguments North and South about corporation tax and about why you increase corporation tax in the Republic but certainly in Northern Ireland there is no justification for it and what I want to do is call upon Sinn Fein, if they do it here in the legacy of Connolly. If they are the socialists republican organisation that they claim to be in Northern Ireland then they must take a stand against this. Hand out the big business and small business for that matter in Northern Ireland, which is going to rob the ordinary person in Northern Ireland of £300 to £400 million per annum.

So it really is a challenge to Sinn Fein, now I can say the same to other parties but I think Sinn Féin is particularly vulnerable given their claims to the political legacy of Connolly. Eugene McGlone did mention he said that putting the reduction of corporation tax isn't going to leave the Eldorado. Well I can tell you this, it certainly looks like it's going to leave the Eldorado of some sort for the business community in Northern Ireland which is already heavily subsidised by the public money. This is the redistribution of money from the ordinary person, the ordinary citizen directly in the business. What should be happening is the redistribution should be the other way. Thank you.

**Jack O'Connor,
President**

Thank you Brian. Speakers?

Ann Donnelly, Derry Trades Council

Delegates, President, Ann Donnelly, Derry Trades Council.

I didn't intend to speak this morning, I didn't intend to speak at all but I got very angry when I was listening to people speaking. We talked about what's happening in the North, I come from one of the very, very deprived areas in Northern Ireland and I feel very angry that the Minister and the Deputy First Minister couldn't be here this morning to hear what the people of Northern Ireland are saying.

I have walked the streets of Derry and I have walked the streets of Belfast to fight for our members' rights, to keep their jobs, to keep their pensions and everything else. I have spent the last six months in English schools talking to young classroom assistants who are holding onto their homes by their fingernails. Anne Speed said we must get behind this motion and fight, we must, because we have a generation out there that didn't experience the eighties, they experienced the good times and are now looking at terrible times. I think we as trade unionist from the North of Ireland must lead those kids to a better future. I as a Mother and a Grandmother would like to think my Children and my Grandchildren will go through this and come out in better times but we can't do it unless we stand and fight together. I think it was Liam Gallagher from UNITE who said we are feeding the dissidence, if we don't fight for these people we will go back to what we had the sixties, the seventies, the eighties and the early nineties and we don't want that and as I say the anger that brought me up here that Robinson and McGuinness couldn't be here or couldn't send anybody here to listen to what we have to say. I say that we take to the streets of Ireland and we say enough is enough. North, South, East or West, where it is, we go and

we fight and we give the young generation that we're always talking about a better future. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Anne.

Martin Stroud, UNITE

Morning Conference. Martin Stroud, UNITE. Sorry President and Conference and Vice President.

I had to speak today for many reasons, one of which is it's actually thirty-six years to this week since I moved permanently to Northern Ireland and although I work in Queens I don't live in leafy Malone Road, I live in the leafy Cliftonville Road area of Belfast and it's been a very interesting year, thirty-six years.

Essentially as a UNITE member and a member of the Conference we put the Motion forward but I want to say something about the report. I understand that the main focus currently is on the campaign against the austerity cuts, and that's quite right, however, I thought there might have been a mention in the report about a few things including we're facing very serious cutbacks in the two universities in Northern Ireland. I work in Queens as I just said and it's very serious. There are hundreds of jobs at stake and although there is a Plan A which is going to be implemented anyway based on the efficiency savings we have to make. If there is no further funding for the two universities, those cuts will be at least doubled and the number of jobs will be twice what they currently expected to be. So we're talking about four hundred job losses at Queens and that's very serious. I know there's a motion further on today about question of higher education funding so we might have a chance to get back to that hopefully.

The second thing though is during the previous year there was a Northern Ireland Committee Report on the Cohesion Strategy. And I know the Trade Unions and the movement made a response but I thought that might have been mentioned specifically in the report. That report wasn't very good but it did point out certain things, for instance the cost of segregation, separation, is not negligible, it's very large in fact and I would like to think, you know, that this is an opportunity to move in the opposite direction towards less segregation and less separation in the Northern Ireland communities and things like integration, more integration in housing and certainly more integration in schooling. I'm a former chairman of the Northern Ireland Integrated Schools Movement and I think there is an opportunity there an unfortunate opportunity maybe that we can move in a more positive direction as a society over the next period of years and I hope that that movement will be in the forefront of arguing for those moves. Thanks.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Delegate. Now are there any further speakers offering on either the report or the Motion? No further speakers offering. So I want to put those matters to the vote now. First of all I'm putting Motion No. 25 in the name of the Executive Council. All in favour please show. All against. Abstentions. I declare Motion No. 25 carried. And now the relevant sections of the Principle Executive Committee Report, Section 4, The Northern Ireland Report. All those in favour of the adoption of that section of the report? All those against. Abstentions. I declare the section of the report adopted. And now I just want to

correct another error earlier when I was acknowledging the presence of invited guests I omitted to mention the presence of Phil Flynn, a former President of Congress and I omitted as well to mention the presence of Padrigín Ní Murchú a member of the Labour Court, when I was listing the other members of the Labour Court. I didn't realise that Padrigín was here, I hadn't seen her and I apologise for that and I wonder Delegates would you extend a warm welcome as well. It's the great difficulty as you know with mentioning names. And now I want to call on a Margaret Browne, who is the Secretary of the Women's Committee. Is Margaret in the hall? Yes. Margaret has been associated with the Trade Union Movement for over forty years and she joined the Irish Bank Officials Association on the 1st May 1969. She's giving a lot away there. She joined the banking world on that day and in her bio she says she's proud to say that she does not regret one day of her association with her great union. She served on the National Executive of the Union since 1974. Served as an officer for eleven years and she wants it to be recorded that she acknowledges the privilege of being elected President in 2009 as she regards as the greatest honour that could be bestowed on any person. So Margaret Browne to address Conference on behalf of the Women's Committee. Margaret.

Margaret Browne, Secretary of the Women's Committee

Thank you President. I speak on behalf of the Women's Committees. The Women's Committee is one of the longest standing formal committees of Congress and continues to provide an opportunity for women in the movement to meet, discuss and influence the agenda to a gender lens. We have a Conference, two leaders of the Trade Union Movement at European and world levels, both women, Sharon Burrows, ITUC General Secretary and Bernadette Segol the incoming Secretary General of the ETUC.

The major initiatives during the period since the last Biennial Delegate Conference was the organisation of a National Conference in 2010 and a Seminar in 2011. The Conference was held in Belfast and was themed Building Equality into Recovery. Two hundred Trade Union Delegates and guests attended and Jack yourself, you addressed the Conference and noted the position of women members within our trade unions and that the Trade Union Movement have a lot of work to do in the area of gender equality and we thank you for your acknowledgement of that Jack.

As a result of the Conference offices from both committees are in North and South, had a joint meeting where a plan of action was put in place based on the Motions debated at Conference. The Women's Committee have established strong and significant links with the Political Parties. Recently a deputation from the committee met with Kathleen Lynch who is the Minister responsible for equality and it was clearly pointed out to her and the Department Officials that national recovery should not be achieved at the expense of dismantling hard won protections for the rights of the vulnerable and weakest in our society or institutions to combat discrimination and promote equality and human rights. Any plan for national recovery should include a strong, effective, independent and adequately resourced equality and human rights infrastructure so that we can emerge from this crisis with a better, fairer society that respects and protects the dignity of all its members.

The deputation discussed with the Minister the employment of persons with disabilities. That could be a physical disability or mental health condition or hearing impairment or intellectual disability. In fact part of our programme is to organise a number of courses in

the Autumn on mental health which is sometimes forgotten or brushed under the carpet. And I would like at this point to commend Pauline Buchanan and her team on the excellent course that was held in Belfast last year.

The minister recognises the issues that are part of our agenda and understands that other departments have responsibilities. She advised that she will speak to Ministers responsible for health, justice and education and advises that she had already spoken to Joan Burton to coordinate and put together a coherent subgroup who will deal with our concerns.

The deputation also argued for the repeat of Section 37 of the Employment Equality Act of 1998, a provision which could allow religious run institutions to treat workers less favourably on the grounds of ethos. This clause unnerves some employees in same sex and non marital relationships. The committee also engaged with the 2010 ETUC project from memberships to leadership advancing women in Trade Unions, which makes a strong case for renewed and strategic approach to achieving gender balance in decision making and leadership structures. One of our key recommendations was that unions must provide structures that encourage and facilitate the participation of women within the union. The joint women's committees met with commission on the Irish Trade Union Movement, which was reported here yesterday by Philip Bowyer and in fact Phillip himself attended two of our Conferences which were organised under the offices of the Women's Committees, Council of the Isles of Derry in October and the Seminar we had in Cork.

Current and former members of the Congress Joint Women's Committee visited Aras An Uachtaran at the invitation of the President, Mary McAleese on the occasion of our 50th Anniversary. And Patricia McKeown, former President, stated we were delighted that the President invited us to celebrate with her 50 years of struggle and achievement on the part of the members of the Women's Committee. The Council of the Isles was held in Derry as I said in October of last year for more than sixty woman trade union leaders vowed to continue to resist, senseless and unjust austerity measures throughout the UK and Ireland. Delegates heard how austerity budgets being implemented were affecting women disproportionately and how this was also bad for the economy and our society and I myself participated in the TUC International Conference in London in March to mark the centenary of International Women's Day. A recent project by the leadership initiative towards a new prosperity This study looks closely at the specific and social costs of gender imbalance persisting in Irish society and how these impact negatively on Ireland's capacity to regenerate itself as a vibrant and competitive economy. In particular it looks at how gender imbalance in education and employment sectors with the high degree of interconnectedness is harmful to both male and females and to the economy as a whole and it highlights the clear and measureable benefits of gender order change.

During the last twelve months a round table discussion, chaired by Sallyanne Kinahan, hosted by the Women's Committee was held in Liberty Hall. This event was an opportunity for the members of the Executive Council and key representatives of other council committees to meet with members of the Women's Committee to explore common issues of concern and to assess how we can work better together into the future. And the Seminar held Cork in March of this year focused on the effects of the crisis on women and the development of a Trade Union response. At that meeting we had presentations from the United States in Columbia and also focused on Ireland's first examination of its human rights performance under the universal periodic review.

Congress Women's Committee and the Trade Unions Friends of Palestine also celebrated International Women's Day linking up with a prominent woman journalist in Gaza and I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mags O'Brien for the excellent work and thankfully your home safe. One of the key areas of work of the Solidarity Committee has been that of forced labour and human trafficking. Placed firmly on the agenda is the issue of combating sexual exploitation. The committee is seeking reform of Ireland's outdated prostitution laws by calling for action to prevent the sexual exploitation of women and children in Ireland through the swift measures against those who buy sex.

An equality audit was conducted in the last number of months which showed that a higher percentage of men occupied the senior positions and rose in the Trade Union Movement. You're talking about a breakdown of 60 to 30. While at administrative levels 85% of those positions are held by women and in relation to a shop stewards and branch representatives, women participate more at that level than the men do. It is intended to undertake a further audit, which hopefully will have an improved response from the affiliates and the President Jack O'Connor welcomed to the fact that we now have these findings and recognises the challenges they pose for the Trade Union Movement and has committed Congress to continue to progress to achieve gender equality in our programmes and structures.

An ILO Convention on domestic workers was held recently and Esther Lynch, who's down there working hard and Patricia King attended the convention and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Esther for all the time and effort that she has devoted to this extremely important issue. The committee also engaged with the migrant rights groups as to what we as union members could do to stop exploitation of migrant domestic workers in Irish homes. One group of people I would like to refer to are the woman that worked in the Magdalene Laundries. These women did not have a voice, they worked for nothing, they were abused and downtrodden and at this stage in their lives don't even have a pension and I would like to thank David Joyce, he has written to the Minister at the request of the woman's committee to ensure that justice, long overdue is done, and that they be compensated for the way they were harshly treated.

There are a lot of other issues which were dealt with during the course of the last two years and this is just a flavour of what both committees have been dealing with. There are many challenges ahead and I'm only scratching at the surface. The Women's Committee also would like to salute the brave workers in the Davenport Hotel dispute and commend SIPTU for the successful efforts in overturning exploitative pay rates. We salute as well the campaign to recover the agreed minimum pay rates. Davenport and the restoration of the minimum pay rates speak volumes to women workers. The Committees North and South have built up an excellent working relationship over the last two years. In consultation with both chairs, offices and staff have had a number of meetings and have drawn up programmes and action plans that will be implemented and developed into the future.

I at this juncture would like acknowledge the support that we receive as committees from Pauline Buchanan and David Joyce, without their efforts and hard work we would not exist.

In conclusion, I believe firmly that we as committees representing women, cannot operate in isolation. There is no point in the Executive Council paying lip service telling us we're doing a great job. We need cooperation, backup, acknowledgement, recognition that our agenda items will form part of the Executive Council's Agenda and finally I am making a statement at this stage that we are demanding from the incoming council their full support in all our endeavours. Thank you Chairman.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Margaret and I want to acknowledge the important work of the Women's Committee and your own important work and long may it continue. I want just to alert Delegates that the fringe meeting that is scheduled today will take place in the Mangerton Suite. It's on the subject of combating extreme exploitation which Margaret alluded to in her remarks. It takes place at 1pm. It's limited to 100 places. It's sponsored by the PSEU which we want to acknowledge and tickets are available on a first come first served basis from the Congress desk. So that's the Fringe Meeting on combating extreme exploitation which is scheduled to take place at 1pm in the Mangerton Suite.

And now Delegates I want to proceed to deal with our next business which is the Section 3 of the Principle Executive Committee Report concerning the social deficit, Chapter 1 entitled Equality is not a Luxury, Chapter 2 entitled the Dutch Model, Chapter 3 Protecting People's Homes, Section 5, Chapter 3, The Women's Committee and Disability and Equality and I want to proceed to Motion 26 in the name of the Executive Council and I want to call on Patricia McKeown to move Motion 26. Patricia.

Patricia McKeown, Executive Council

President, Delegates, Patricia McKeown moving 26 on behalf of the Executive Council.

I want to pay tribute to Margaret for that report, that shining example of what happens when North, South, we work together, we really do make a difference.

This motion is called 'Equality' and what an elusive goal that is. It's a motion about the barriers to equality, discrimination, exploitation, oppression, the absence of fundamental human rights and deepening poverty. It's a long motion. It contains a range of statistics. It contains information about key pieces of research. It has been fed into by the women's committees, North and South, the disability committees North and South. It encompasses the oppression experience by our black and ethnic minority members, young people, older people, pensioners, our lesbian gay, bisexual and transgendered members and let no one think that discrimination on the grounds of religious believe and political opinion has in anyway been eliminated on this Island and particularly in the jurisdiction in which I live.

There are a number of UN comments on the two states covered by this congress. The UN Convention on social economic and cultural rights has successively made comment on the failure of the UK Government and it mentioned in particularly in respect of Northern Ireland and the failure of the Irish Government to accord social and economic rights as it should do, and in particular the failure to eliminate discrimination. The UN Committee on the elimination of the discrimination against women has also in its comments on both Ireland the UK highlighted the fact that these are profoundly unequal societies which have not eliminated discrimination against women. In all of the categories covered by this

Motion the one key statistic is that the majority of people facing discrimination, inequality and oppression on this Island are still women, be they black and ethnic minority women, older women, young women, women with disabilities, be they women of different sexual orientation or with or without caring responsibilities, women workers, or women at home, or women in society as a whole, and women in this movement.

The other key statistic is that women are now 51% of the membership of the Irish Trade Union Movement. And if we work very hard and determinedly that figure will grow because a very large number of unorganised workers, workers we have yet to bring into the ranks of our movement and protect are women, in some of the most exploitive of circumstances.

Margaret has made reference to some of the horrendous things that are happening. On this Island there are appalling things and when we open the lid on the barriers to equality what we see is a cesspit not too far from here and in towns and cities across this Island as we speak, young women and young girls have been trafficked in for sexual exploitation. You will find them advertised on the internet, like a lunch menu or a dinner menu and you will find that there are among the population of this Island those with sufficient money and lack of morals and integrity to dine well off that menu and we as the Trade Union Movement are the voice that is speaking up against that exploitation and I do again pay particular tribute to Women's Committees North and South because they are putting this centre stage on the agenda. And that is just but one example. There is much that needs to change in this society.

The Motion refers to things that we still need to do. It resolves that equality and human rights cannot merely be something that Ireland, and we mean North and South in this Motion, will attend to once economic crisis is over. Well it was something that should have been attended to when times were better and there was money to build a genuine and fair and equal social infrastructure and that did not happen and it will not happen unless we come together with the exploited and the oppressed and make it happen. So I'm not prepared to hear Governments North or South using economic crisis as an excuse for the fact that this is still a deeply divided discriminatory ill divided society in both jurisdictions.

Of all the exploitation which I'm outlining, the greatest is against working class women. It is about a society which had serious poverty and deprivation but that was driven almost underground in terms of economic boom. I well remember a Conference to this Congress where community representative from Ballymun got up and spoke about the Celtic Tiger and described the community of Ballymun as one that was not even a stripe on the tiger's ass. That I think is the picture that was repeated across this Island. Those are the invisible people, the people of no voice and the people who now need to be not enabled to speak because they have all the ability and could teach us a thing or two when it comes to struggle and campaign but who need to hear that we understand their circumstances.

So this Motion is not a pious one saying of course the Trade Union Movement thinks equality is a good thing, we would think that anyway wouldn't we? This is a genuine Motion that is about a commitment to a programme of action that must address all the elements of discrimination, oppression and the absence of human rights we described. This Motion concludes with a statement every one of us will agree and that is that it is absolutely key to our campaign that we organise the unorganised and the unorganised

are among the most exploited of the workforce. And that is absolutely true, that it cannot be about organising the unorganised, it also has to be about what we as women in this movement have been saying for thirty years. It has to be about a bargaining agenda and a political agenda in the Trade Union Movement, which doesn't pay lip service to or tick box on the issue of discrimination and the pursuit of equality of opportunity, but puts it core, centre stage, at the heart of our bargaining processes. So I stand here thirty odd years later in a movement which over fifty three years of its current existence has produced only two Presidents who are women, both from the same union and both feminists and say that we still have a long way to go inside our movement that comes to looking at whether we are embracing the concept of equality of opportunity in a real way and whether we are ourselves changing our culture. I do pay tribute to what we have achieved as a movement over the last thirty odd years. Over the years since we stood on this platform and members of the Women's Committee had to highlight the fact that a young woman, a child, called Joanne Lovett who had been the victim of sexual abuse had died giving birth in a grotto, in a graveyard in Granard because everybody failed her, community failed her, everybody failed her. I would like to think that we live in a world where that failure has been put right but I fear that that sort of exploitation is still out there and at our doorsteps. And I think we are a movement which has grown up into the 21st Century and that all of the angst and the hysteria caused by the fact of people like me and many other women in this room including Padrigín Ni Murchú up there, who got up and said that we needed to put our own house in order, we're not the enemy we were talking about being committed trade unionists who needed our movement to listen and change in order to change the condition of this society. I think we have succeeded in some of that and I pay tribute to all including union leaders who have committed to that but we have a long, long way to go and as far as I'm around this will continue to be core and centre stage work of this movement. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Patricia. Eamon?

Eamon Devoy, TEEU

Good morning President, Delegates, Devoy, TEEU seconding the motion on equality.

It is a very comprehensive motion and Patricia has brought you through many of the issues that were addressed in it. I just want to address two things briefly. Not enough can be said about the fact that people are being trafficked into this country on an ongoing basis, women and young children, for sexual exploitation and David Begg and myself have been at the forefront of a campaign about turn off the red light. I've made it known that the Russian Mafia have a big hand to play in this criminal activity and there have been direct threats to me and indirect threats to David Begg about the uncovering of the criminals involved in this activity so it is a very, very serious matter. A €100 million changed hands in Dublin in 2010 alone. So it's a thriving industry and it's one that has to be brought out into the open and we have to deal with it seriously. Sr Stanislaus Kennedy will be speaking at this Conference later today and I hope your all in the hall to give your full attention on this matter.

The second thing and Patricia said earlier that we have done a lot around the equality agenda but there's more to do. There's one thing and I'm sure when I say this you'll all have resonance of what I'm about to say. It's the growing level of discrimination and

negativity against our unemployed colleagues. There's a terrible stigma associated with our unemployed colleagues. They are absolutely being discriminated against and in the Republic of Ireland, as you well know, there are nine grounds prohibiting discrimination under the Employment Equality Legislation and we seriously need to have an additional ground and that is the discrimination against the unemployed members in our society.

All over Ireland workers are battling about unfair perceptions about their inability because they have the wrong address, the wrong accent or simply because they are long term unemployed. Unemployed families have to struggle, not only with the financial consequences of job loss, but also with the stigma, negative stereo typing and unfair discrimination. Landlords are refusing to rent properties to people that are unemployed and employers without a doubt are eliminated job applicants on the basis that they are on socio economic grounds. Now in other parts of the world and in other jurisdictions they have dealt with this and under Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights it prohibits discrimination on ten grounds, and that includes social origin, property, birth and other status. So really what we need to do here is we need to campaign and we need to campaign quickly and vigorously to support our unemployed colleagues and to try and have a tenth ground included in the legislation. We'll never be able to stop the employer from putting the particular application in the bin but there are other visual circumstances in which we can and will prohibit discrimination. Thank you for your time. I commend the motion to Conference.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Delegate. Just an announcement Delegates I want to alert you to the fact that the polling station which is located upstairs in the Standing Orders Room will close at 1 O'clock sharp so it's important for those intending to vote that you be aware of that. Secondly I just want to make you aware Delegates that recently we were in the place where we had an abundance of time. We are now actually running about half an hour overtime and perhaps we should have scheduled some of the business for last evening but I'm now asking for your cooperation so that we can finish the business allocated to Conference and I want to ask the mover of Motion No. 27 in the name of UNISON to approach the podium and then if the seconder of the Motion could be ready and then the movers of Motion 28 in the name of the PCS be ready to move and the movers of Motion 29 in the name of The IMO. So Motion 27 calling on UNISON to move the Motion. Pamela.

Pamela Dooley, UNISON

Chair, Delegates, Pamela Dooley, UNISON moving Motion 27 on Protecting Welfare Systems, Public Services and Fundamental Human Rights.

We all know that equality and fundamental human rights comes under major attack at times of economic recession and political instability. When I address the People's Congress in Belfast earlier this year I argued that equality and social and economic rights in Ireland and Britain are themselves in recession due to the collective actions of central and devolved Governments. It is clear from the nature and sophistication of the attacks on welfare benefit systems, health and social care systems, education and public housing in particular, that the right wing has been planning them over the period of time which predates the global economic and financial crisis. We might have hoped that the global and economic crisis had sounded the death knell on the right wing Governments, the

unregulated financial institutions, the speculators and the corruption and greed which caused it. Instead it has provided the pretext for Governments to attack the fundamental rights of working people, particularly women and groups vulnerable to exploitation. Their actions have combined to deny the people their right to work, to help and social care, to education, to housing, to an adequate standard of living and to trade union rights. Even the strongest human rights commitments and the toughest laws designed to tackle discrimination and promote equality of opportunity such as those underpinning the Peace Agreement have been deliberately sidestepped.

Both the Irish and the UK Governments are guilty of blatant non-compliance, not only with the domestic laws but with international conventions, charters and treaties to which they are signatories. It is incumbent on this movement that we need the strategic challenge. Not only is it the right thing to do but those suffering the brunt of deepening discrimination and disadvantage include our own most vulnerable members. Workers who desperately need to be organised by us and entire communities facing widening inequality and deepening poverty.

From all the key analysis it is clear that the greatest adverse impact is to women, working class women in particular and the most disadvantaged in our society. It is no consequence that those now in power have launched the attack on public services. Our public services are one of the main vehicles for entwining the fundamental human rights of the people and socio economic rights in particular. It is stunning to find no difference in the consequences of the positions taken by Cameron, Clegg, Government in London, the Kelly Gilmore, Government in Dublin and the Robinson McGuinness led coalition in the North. We are in no doubt that this is the time for our movement to go on the offensive and to come out fighting. We are not prepared to be bowed down by pessimism. We know that the response must be strategic and combine political action, with direct action by communities, industrial action by workers and legal challenge at both domestic and international level. Ordinary people know how dire their circumstances are. What they need to hear in this, what they need to hear is that this movement, not only utterly understands those circumstances but is prepared to strategically use all of the tools at our disposal to challenge and address them. Delegates I move this motion and call for your support.

Patricia King, Vice President

Thank you Pamela. Now can I have the seconder please? Ok seconder? Formally. Thank you. We move on then to Motion 28 in the name of the PCS. May we have the mover please? Thank you.

Barney Lawn, PCS

President, Conference, Delegates, Barney Lawn, PCS moving Motion 28.

During the week Conference highlighted the bleak future under the current administrations with their agenda to drive down their working conditions to the lowest wages and the most temporary of contracts and return to the latest education system for only those who can pay for it and as for the unemployed slave labour schemes under the guise of internship and the like. We also spoke and identified our responsibility to look after the future generations. An estimated 135,000 young and talented Irish people will emigrate to seek employment and educational opportunities. Figures show that youth unemployment is

rising fast than the overall unemployment figures. We heard from the ICTU Youth Speaker who made reference to the figures in Ireland but if you translate that to look at the European stats, 5 million 15 to 24 year olds are unemployed across Europe.

David Begg's response to An Taoiseach identify the need for a progressive tax system to make the top 20% pay for the financial crisis and not the bottom 20% who did not cause it. PCS is part of the tax justice network which is an international coalition of researchers and activists with a shared concern about the harmful impacts of tax avoidance, tax competition and tax havens launch the fight for the alternative. Speakers during the week made reference to the Richard Murphy Report, a tax economist whom has worked with PCS and indeed has been assisted to the Northern Ireland Committee of Congress and indeed within HMRC we have identified that there is no need for the cuts etc. with the 120 billion evaded and avoided tax annually and that there is part of our arguments and part of our campaigns and indeed that is mirrored and fitted in well with the better fair way campaign. As part of that campaign we did identify the top ten tax dodgers on a weekly basis for a couple of months and of course the names are familiar; Vodafone, Phillip Green, Top Shop, Boots but HMRC actually at top of the list, and why we say that is because of the loopholes. Indeed there's further evidence three years ago the Public Accounts Committee critical of the tax man's failure to extract penalties from tax dodging multinationals after learning that if penalised companies dealt with it by large business service. And only 19 cases totalling 15 million this is around 0.6% of under-declared tax and HMRC promised to try harder in the future. Figures obtained under the eye of Freedom of Information has shown the position is now dramatically worse.

In 2009/10 just six penalties were charged totalling 442,000 and as this fiscal year draws to a close fewer than five penalties have been charged for three thousand two hundred and twenty two. These figures represent less than 0.1% of tax under declared. The rate for smaller business is about two hundred times this figure.

A Better Fairer Way Campaign mirrors PCS in the argument for the alternative and now with the setting up of the economic research in the ICTU it should be a top priority on the agenda to gather evidence based arguments to close the tax gap.

In conclusion PCS would like to thank the Northern Ireland Committee and all affiliates Trades Councils who supported us in our industrial action on the 30th June. Whilst a large based union in the UK, three thousand members in Northern Ireland then our dependency on Congress and the support that we got there was indeed welcomed and very much appreciated by the members. That industrial action we were forced into, if you like, was whilst the media tried to identify pensions as the only thing there. It was job cuts and the protocols while you can talk about Croke Park etc. we did have protocols and agreements for no compulsory redundancies. These haven't been adhered to and that was part and parcel of that industrial action which was much wider and again putting forward the alternative argument and giving us the opportunity that there is a fairer and a better way. I would ask you to support the motion and to continue to fight for the way forward. Thank you.

Patricia King, Vice President

Thank you speaker. Now may we have a seconder please? Is there a seconder for Motion No. 28? Have we a formal, formally seconded. Thank you Brian. I move on now to Motion No. 29 in the name of the IMO. Have we a mover?

Anthony Owens, IMO

Congress, Delegates, my name is Anthony Owens. I'm from the Irish Medical Organisation and I'm moving Motion 29.

Motion 29 reads expenditure on health is an investment in the future well being of the nation. It is vital that the mistakes of the late 1980's should never be repeated. Congress urges the Government to consider the health of the nation and not just the health of our banking sector and refrain from further cuts to health service funding. Now delegates while it is right and appropriate that we should always laud Irish ingenuity and inventiveness, it can give us neither pleasure or pride to note that we in Ireland appear to have mastered the art of time travel as it seems the country is once again mired in the dismal decade of the 1980's. We should need no reminding this was a decade when the country stagnated in good years but apparently shrunk in most and as result spending on health and other social services was repeatedly cut as Governments of all parties took an axe to apparently low hanging fruit.

We all remember how newly elected Government which campaigned on the slogan and I quote "Health cuts hurt the old, the handicapped and the sick" suffered its own crippling bout of amnesia upon gaining office. Cuts and services continued and led to hospital closures and extended waiting lists for admissions and treatment in other now over stretched locations. Many of our best and our brightest, including our doctors, left the country, taking their invaluable and expensively acquired skills abroad to benefit the patients and tax payers of Britain, the United States, Australia and other more fortunate Countries. Consequently as spending and service capacity was cut, so public health suffered as more and more patients who were denied early intervention found themselves suffering from chronic diseases. Padoxically but predictably, short term cuts increased long term costs as patients could have been treated in primary care slipped through the cracks and ended up in need of costlier and longer term secondary level care.

Now two decades later after the delusory boom and a very real bust we find ourselves back in approximately the same place. Indeed some might say that we are in an even worse position than we were in the dark days of the 1980's. Crippled as the economy and society are by Fiscal and banking crisis. The public health service is under pressure as never before. The Health Service Executive's 2011 Service Plan called for their services to continue at their 2010 levels despite nine hundred and sixty two million Euro's worth of cuts to the HSE's Global budget.

It seems that in the opinion of the previous Government health professionals were considered to be better value for money out of work than in work. And once again our non consultant hospital doctors are leaving the country, albeit, this time in numbers that could never before have been conceivable. In addition to this, in a recent study commissioned by the IMO, we discovered that over half of consultants under the age of fifty consider their own moral and that of their colleagues to be of so low that they would consider resignation from their current post. When this sample is expanded to include all

consultants fully a third would consider leaving their current position. Now while these figures represent a snapshot at a particular moment, in time the implications of such widespread disillusionment and under medical leaders of the public health service are shocking indeed and serve to cast the grey of doubts after the viability of the much wanted consultant delivered health service. Now in light of these factors which presage increased difficulties in delivering hospital services, it is both timely and appropriate that the Government should place an emphasis on treating as many patients as possible in a primary care setting.

We in the IMO stand ready to engage constructively with the Minister to ensure our members who work in primary care continue to deliver an excellent standard of care to their patients. However, just as the Government signals its intention to treat more patients via primary care so we intend to ensure that and I borrow another phrase much in vogue "money follows the patient into primary care". In addition to this, we must be clear in saying that should significant numbers of patient treatment needs be met in a primary care setting, this must not be used as an excuse to run down hospital, secondary and tertiary care which must remain vital parts of the health service.

In light of the foregoing let me be clear in saying that we are acutely aware of the powerless state of the Irish public finances. Yet instead of viewing health spending be it in the context of primary, secondary or tertiary care as a cost, let us properly acknowledge it as an investment in the future health of the nation.

Let the message be clear. We must not repeat the mistakes of the late 1980's when cuts in health spending, in pursuit of a healthier bottom financial line stored up future health problems that came back to impose a greater human and financial cost at a later time. The current funding level for the health service must be maintained and front line services must be protected. The current funding level which has produced a health service which has been stretched almost to breaking point is the bear minimum required to maintain a health service that lives up to its goals and aims

Patricia King, President

Okay speaker thank you

Anthony Owens, IMO

The IMO therefore calls on the Government to commit to at least maintain investment in the health service at its current levels.

Patricia King, President

Okay speaker I'll just ask you if you could conclude if you wouldn't mind?

Anthony Owens, IMO

I will say finally Delegates if as we are told there is the money available to transfuse into this sclerotic veins of a banking system that could have been pronounced dead a long time ago, surely there are resources available to protect the health and wellbeing of this nation? Just as we were once told that Ireland

Patricia King, President

Okay thank you. Thank you speaker. Thank you. Have we a seconder for the Motion?

Sheila Dixon, INMO

Sheila Dixon, Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation seconded the Motion 29.

President, fellow Delegates even in the midst of all the attention currently given to our economic situation we must as a Trade Union Movement continue to demand an accessible and safe public health service. In the past year, according to official figures, over four thousand one hundred posts have been lost in our public health service with two thousand six hundred of those being at ward level. This uncontrolled reduction in staffing has taken place against the background of an ever increasing level of demand for healthcare from this Countries still growing population. In the same period the Health Service has suffered a reduction in funding of almost 900 million Euros and we are told that for next year a similar level of reduction in financial allocation can be expected.

Against the background of these cold statistics, I want to remind you of what these health cuts will mean to you, your families and your friends. The result of these sledge hammer policies will be the closure or curtailment of many services in smaller and medium sized hospitals without there being any viable and accessible alternative service available. Reductions in community based services including early child help, geriatric surveillance and services for marginalised and disadvantaged groups. Extended waiting periods for an out patients appointment, let alone admission to hospital for a elective treatment, the privatisation with the consequences that we have seen in recent weeks of services for the older persons, which we will all need in the years ahead. Curtailment of services to those with a physical or intellectual disability and ever increasing levels of overcrowding in A&E Departments with the inevitable compromising of patient care combined with loss of dignity and privacy for the individual sick person. We are told we do not have the money to invest in our health service but colleagues I say instead that we have no other choice but to invest in our public health service in the interests of those who cannot afford the private alternative and who are living on an increasing basis from week to week trying to make ends meet. This Motion speaks about not repeating the mistakes of the 1980's when services were cut with no alternative service available. Hello Delegates this is exactly what we are doing, except this time it is being done with a much sharper knife and with much deeper cuts. It is imperative that Congress in the next two years priorities the protection of a public health service, which is efficient, which is effective and which is quality assured. This Congress must not accept that we continue cutting the health budget without there being serious harm done to the most vulnerable in our society. Please support this Motion. Please become active in your local community to protect existing services until an acceptable alternative is available. And as long as we have money to bail out the bank then we have money to look after the old and the sick. Thank you.

Patricia King, President

Thank you Delegate very much. I move on now to Motion No. 30 in the name of the GSU. We're taking speakers at the end having moved the motions.

Sean Mackell, GSU

Colleagues, Sean Mackell, Guinness Staff Union to move Motion 30 which highlights the plight of people living with Aspergers Syndrome.

I'd like to commence by thanking our colleagues and Teacher's Union of Ireland for their interest in our Motion. Many teachers have to deal with young Asperger's sufferers in the classroom and understand the importance of early diagnosis and appropriate funding.

Aspergers is a developmental disorder at the high functioning end of the Autistic spectrum. Change and choice are two different concepts for those with Aspergers. They develop a routine and are often loath to move away from it. Often logic overrides other emotions. Recently a young person with Aspergers told that there was no point in studying history. It was all about dead people he said. What's the point in that? Another doesn't like to get his hair cut because he says because it hurts him, even though when the barber said it can't cut you to get your hair cut and the lad replied well how can you say that? It's my hair and you can't feel it.

Day to day life can be very difficult, however marvellous work can be done following early diagnosis and if support functions are put in place. Unfortunately most Aspergers go undiagnosed because of the difficulty of determining whether the problem is just one of slow personal development or whether it is a life long autistic condition. Many of us are from the 'grow into' or 'grow out of' generation. When I was growing up in the 1950's my mother routinely made clothes for me that were two sizes too big so I could grow into them. Unfortunately by the time I grew into them the clothes were often finished. Likewise if you had a stammer, if you were obese, we called it puppy fat or early onset asthma you were told that you would grow out of it and many of us did. However some people, like Asperger sufferers never grow out of it because they have a condition they will carry with them all their lives.

It can be helped firstly by a wider understanding in society. Speech therapy is often very helpful to help the young gain the confidence to engage in conversations instead of retreating into a quiet place and remaining there. Counselling can improve confidence and help aid social development. Most importantly the rest of us can help by understanding that the quiet lad or lassie in the corner who doesn't retain eye contact, who rarely speaks and is often has a completely different outlook on life is not being odd by choice but because of an imbalance in his or her makeup. So much can be done if there is a will to do it. I know money is tight. I know services are stretched. I know other good causes are chasing the same path, however many Asperger sufferers cannot speak out for themselves as well as other groups and that is why we are asking Conference to speak out on their behalf. Please support the motion. Thank you.

Patricia King, President

Thank you very much speaker. Now have we a seconder for that Motion? Have we a seconder? Formally seconded, thank you. And then the last Motion in this group, Motion No. 31 in the name of USDAW. Thank you.

Stephen Campbell, USDAW

Chair, Congress under-age sales is a major issue for shop workers. Our members are in the front line of enforcing legislation. It helps keep children safe from the dangers of alcohol and age restricted products. We support the need to prevent under-age sales but that puts shop workers at risk when they refuse to serve customers who feel they prove old enough to buy the product. It is not just alcohol. They are printed on the product age restrictions for sales of things going down as young as twelve. That's why USDAW has run

an under-age sales campaign. We ran a survey amongst our retail members and the facts are and in Northern Ireland 26% of shop workers have been physically assaulted at work and in the past twelve months alone 29% have been threatened, 43% have been verbally abused. Over quart of all incidents resulted from shop workers asking customers for proof of ID or refusing a sale of an age-restricted product such as cigarettes or alcohol. These results are higher than in Britain where an average of 10% of shop workers are assaulted as opposed to 26% in Northern Ireland. This is totally unacceptable. Things have to change. We're grateful for the support from the Northern Ireland assembly. At a debate in the main chamber last year we received wholehearted support from all the parties. The PSNI are also very supportive and they want to help us and the employers to make the retail work places safer, yet more needs to be done.

While the onus lies on the shop worker there are always going to be problems. Our members have no say in the retailer's decision to sell restricted age restricted products or under-aged buyers decision to buy these products yet they are the ones that end up the criminal prosecution because it is an offence to sell an age restricted product to someone who's underage. That is why things must change. It calls on the Northern Ireland Executive to launch a major publicity campaign to make shoppers aware. The law of prosecution also needs change. Whilst we don't condone the retailers or shopkeepers who deliberately flout their legal responsibilities where due to things such as genuine error or a sale at a particularly busy time, a prosecution occurs or it is considered it should be the shop, it should not be the shop worker who shoulders the blame. The responsibility in such a case should fall on the purchaser. Nor in the case should disciplinary action be taken against the shop worker by the employer if the employer is genuinely concerned. Basically they should get someone to monitor the sales area or the checkouts and retail things also needs tackling. This process is where the employer trains standards and the police send in under age children to buy age restrictive products. This is used in a very heavy handed manner. Rather than focusing on company procedures and processes they are perceived as catching out the shop worker leading to a feeling of dismay and ill feeling for the individual concerned. That is why such an approach should be re-examined and in particular lead to a situation where test purchasing is targeted at serial offenders. It is intelligence-led and it is controlled by a Code of Practise.

This is a big issues for shop workers in Northern Ireland and I'm sure it's equally of concern to the retail sector in the Republic of Ireland so similar demands need to be put in place in the Republic's coalition Government as we are making a Northern Ireland assembly in the British Government. Congress under-age sales is a very serious issue and strict enforcements lead to a healthier population and a reduction of anti-social behaviour. However it must not be at the expense of the hard working shop worker being subject to violence, abuse and prosecution. I move.

Patricia King, Vic President

Thank you very much speaker. Now have we a seconder for that Motion? Have we a seconder? Is there a formal seconder? Thank you very much. Now so I want to go on now to speakers for that group of motions so you might just identify the motions to which your speaking to when you come to the podium. Thank you very much. Speakers?

Noreen Muldoon, INMO

Noreen Muldoon, INMO speaking to Motion 29.

Chair, Delegates, I urge you to support this Motion. You'll be aware that the Government and the HSE have made the decision to close the emergency department in Roscommon County Hospital and down grade the service in the hospital by providing an urgent care centre, whatever that might be. It's a new one for most of us and we haven't been informed as yet as to what type of service they will provide. That is an 8am to 8pm service with no service whatsoever at night, West Doc the out of hours GP service will provide whatever care there is to be provided to the residents of Roscommon after hours other than the ambulance service that will transport the patients to other hospitals within the region.

The lack of adequate consultation with the people of Roscommon and the unions representing the staff in the hospital about the closure of services and the failure to put in place adequate safe and proven alternatives services based in Roscommon proposed by the unions. Colleagues we ask for your full support to the campaign by the local community to maintain appropriate services in Roscommon. We further call for immediate engagement with the health services unions by the HSE leading to the introduction of a new twenty-four seven service capable of meeting the needs of the local community and is fit for purpose. The downgrading of the Roscommon Emergency Department and in patient service in reality necessitates the population of Roscommon to travel to up to 130 kilometres to access health care even with minor ailments.

In addition the pressure this will place on the already overburdened emergency department services in the other hospitals for example UHG, Sligo, Portluncula and all of the other surrounding hospitals is enormous. People will not all make or will be able to make this journey. That is not a health service to be proud of. Citizens have to mobilise as this will be the model for smaller hospitals. If any of you colleagues are in Dublin this evening and are available please join the Roscommon's People's Protest at the Dáil.

The consequences for the approximate 400 employees at Roscommon County Hospital is at this point in time unknown. This is a prime example of a repeat of the mistakes of the 1980's and the tragic consequences of the downgrading of services in Monaghan for instance where a patient lost his life unnecessarily as a result in a cut in services that are similar to that now being introduced in Roscommon County Hospital. I urge you to support this Motion.

Patricia King, Vice President

Thank you speaker. Now next speaker?

Joe Roe, CPSU

Joe Roe, CPSU delegates speaking in support of Motion 26. I think it's imperative that ICTU continue to campaign for equality because following the collapse of the banking sector the one area in this country which has suffered the most is actually equality. This Government and the previous Government seem quite willing to ignore all the advances that were made in the fields of equality and I think ICTU should make a priority in any discussion with the Government to put the equality agenda back on track. I mean gender, all types of equality. So Delegates support Motion 26 because otherwise we as a country will continue to go back from where we were. So please Delegates support Motion 26. Thank you.

Patricia King, Vice President

Thank you speaker.

Marjorie Trimble, UNISON

Chair, Delegates, Marjorie Trimble, UNISON supporting Motion 26, 27 and speaking to the section of the report.

This current economic crisis is without a doubt a manmade disaster. Had there been more women in this city, no glass ceilings and greater diversity in the boardroom we may not be in this sorry state that we now find ourselves. Let us hope that we learn our lesson from this recession. That when we emerge there will be many more women in the top jobs, as decision makers in the city, in politics and in public rights because in times of recession it is women who suffer the most. We know that stress, anger and frustration at money worries can spill over into domestic violence. Women and children are primarily the victims. If we are to change the patterns of discrimination in Ireland across both jurisdictions then our movement must be the driver for that change. But nobody knows better what kind of ill divided society we live in than those amongst our members and their families who live in deepest disadvantage. Many of these women are members of unions, but many more are not and we have to rise to the challenge of convincing them that we stand in direct opposition to everything in our society that is causing their oppression.

I stand here to reaffirm that all women are real human beings in this society. They are entitled that our movement will take on Governments on their behalf. Please support the Motion.

Patricia King, Vice President

Thank you speaker. Next speaker please?

Cormac O'Dalaigh Communication Workers' Union

Chairman, Congress, Cormac O'Dalaigh, Communication Workers' Union speaking in favour of Motion 30 from the Guinness Workers' about the people suffering with Aspergers. I don't think there is actually anyone here who would vote against the motion but isn't it a sad day that you have to put a motion here to get people with things like Aspergers, Autism or Dyspraxia supported from our own Government? I think what's happening now is figures are being thrown out at us that there is going to be 5% cuts, 6% cuts and we don't really see the faces, we don't see the people who are suffering from that. I think things are only going to get worse.

I recently got involved in a case of a neighbour of mine. He's an eight year old boy called Lorcan Lyons from Crumlin in Dublin. Lorcan was born with a condition called TPN which is basically your born with no gut. He spend the first two years of his life living in Crumlin Hospital until his mother decided to convert her house so that he could come home and live a relatively normal life. It involves him being fed on a line every night of his life. His life expectancy isn't fantastic but one of the great things that Lorcan got was that he got into mainstream schools in the local Gael Scoil when he was four years of age, five years of age, and his personality blossomed, his health improved. He had a Special Needs Assistant from the time he started in the school because he could die if he doesn't get to hospital within fifteen minutes of bleeding or many other complications that he has.

Unfortunately a week ago the school were informed that he would now only have half a Special Needs Assistance so unfortunately Lorcan is going to have to get ill while his Special Needs Assistance is there or could possibly die. Now I think this is absolutely disgraceful. I think the problem is that it's only people like the Trade Union Movement that will speak up for people like Lorcan and I'd ask people if they get any change to highlight the case of people like this. Thank you very much Conference.

Patricia King, Vic President

Thank you very much speaker. Now can we have the next speaker please?

Ray Rafferty, UNISON

Thanks President, Delegates, Ray Rafferty, UNISON supporting Motion 29.

Investment in Health and Public Services is essential but that's not what we're given. We're getting tax and we're getting cuts. In recent weeks UNISON has exposed in Northern Ireland the McKinsey Report by an American multi national conglomerate and paid for from the Northern Ireland purse. What it amounts to is the greatest attack on public services in our sixty-three year history of the NHS. It's scandalous. It's going to cut treatments, essential treatments. It's going to stop certain drugs. It's going to put lives at risk and it's going to damage the health of our society. It also goes on to sack ten thousand health service workers. That's two hundred doctors, nine hundred nurses and thousands of frontline staff. We've exposed this. Our Politicians mentioned a name but they didn't say the detail. We went out and we told our members we challenged the politicians before they'll action. We challenge them on their doorsteps. We mobilised their branches but most importantly we got some of the parties to change their minds, to do u-turns. That was Sinn Feinn, that was the Ulster Unionist Party and it was the SDLP. But there's still big parties out there who haven't changed their minds. There still supporting these cuts. They're going to devastate our society. That's the DUP and the Alliance Party.

What we need to do next, we decided we're going to take industrial action. That we're going for a ballet. We intended to do it in June. We've now agreed with other colleagues within the ICTU and other Trade Unions that we're going to mobilise and go for industrial action in September. We need to stand together, we need to fight these cuts.

The NHS is sixty-three years old this week. One of our Delegates is also sixty-three, Stephen Kennedy. Who was one of the first kids born in the NHS. He's near retirement. The NHS is not fit for retirement. We need to keep it for another sixty-three years. Support the industrial action. Stop the cuts.

Patricia King, Vice President

Thanks you very much speaker. Can we have the next speaker please?

Gerard Croughwell , TUI

President, Delegates, Gerard Croughwell, Teachers Union of Ireland supporting Motion 27.

Delegates, this Motion talks about protecting the welfare system and I want to put my cards on the table before I speak to the education part of it. I've experienced unemployment. But for life chances I would be on the other side of this debate today. I

would be one of the capitalists out there looking for you guys to be nailed to the ground. But life plays funny tricks on us and sometimes we don't get what we want so in 1983 when I went broke, business went to the wall. I found myself unemployed, with no income and because of pride I would not go and draw welfare and it was only when I walked in the door one evening and saw my wife sitting at the kitchen table crying. And I asked her is why are you crying and she said to me all we have today is a loaf of bread and three beetroots and we had two kids.

Many, many, many people out there today have had really good jobs and suddenly find themselves unemployed, so we're talking about protecting the welfare system that protects them. And part of protecting the welfare system is protecting the right to education. I work in the further education sector, a sector that provides educational courses for some 30 thousand students in the Republic of Ireland. That sector does not exist officially. It's been around since 1982 but it does not exist officially. However, it's not the sector I'm here to argue for here today. There will be another day for that. I'm here today to speak for those students. The students that come to us looking for up skilling or retraining. Any student walking into a further education college anywhere in Ireland today is faced with one of three problems. The first problem is is there a place? Further education in Ireland is turning away thousands of students every year. Secondly there is a matter of funding. We now have an entry fee of €200 student. Many students are faced with a college services charge because of lack of resources of between fifty and three hundred Euros. Many students have to face exam fees ranging from €50 to €1000. Where is their equality of opportunity when those with nothing are being asked to pay? The choice for a student can be will I eat today or will I pay for an exam?

Just before I came down to this Congress I got an email from one of last years students, a young chap by the name of Robert. Robert had taken the first of two exams which would have given him the entry level qualification he needed to get into the IT sector. The first exam was one hundred and eleven Euros and the second exam was one hundred and eleven Euros. Robert sent me an email and he said thank you Gerry for enquiring about my success at the exams. I'd like to tell you that I passed the first part but I can't afford the second.

Patricia King, Vice President

Speaker - time.

Gerard Croughwell, TUI

Thank you. I'll finish up very quickly. So that guy cannot finish the qualification and as such will remain on welfare. So why are we as a society tolerating a situation where those who are seeking an opportunity to up skill we're turning them away? We're ready in further education to provide the education and up skilling these people want. We want to provide the education but we want them to have the dignity of a sound welfare system while they go through that. Thank you very much. Support Motion 27.

Patricia King, Vice President

Thank you speaker. Next speaker? Next speaker?

John Kunjumon, UNISON

Chair, Delegates, John Kunjumon from UNISON supporting Motion 26 on Equality, Motion 27 and a Section of the Report.

The resurgence of race hate crime in Belfast is directly linked to the activists BNP and Compact 8. They may not have been standing on the street advertising their presence but they are the poison in the minds of those who launch the attacks. To our shame Belfast has been revealed as the headquarters for the BNP with its secret call centres sweeping out racists information. It boasts Northern Ireland's membership is rising steadily very, very well.

We as a family have been victims of hate crime and we were forced to move out of our own family home to rented accommodation where we live still because of the ongoing racial attacks. My union has been and continuing to be great support to us. I'm proud that my union at the moment continues to be at the forefront of highlighting and attempting to tackle the growth of evil, racism and racial attacks.

I call on the Conference to wholeheartedly support this motion and for every activist who works together not only to stem the rising tide of race discrimination and hatred but to demonstrate through our actions that we are agents of equality and social change which can transform from the society we all live in. Conference there has never been a better time to do this. I support this. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Delegate.

Paul Bell, SIPTU

President Paul Bell, SIPTU Health Division speaking in support of Motion 29.

Just to share some facts with you in relation to the health services of today, the HSE in the Republic of Ireland anyway. I know there are issues in Northern Ireland which are very similar. Is that a lot of the crisis we are facing are actually manufactured by the HSE. By failing to plan and respond to situations caused by lack of funding, lack of planning, lack of vision. And as we watch the dismantling of our health services which was epitomised yesterday by the speed at which Roscommon County Hospital could be closed, a hospital that has been serving a wide community for many many years and a very successful hospital and very highly valued by the citizens of that area. The problem is that we become somewhat desensitised by these things because it's happening everywhere. It's Dundalk, it's Navan, it's Nenagh and other locations like Mallow. The concern is here is that the Motion we're putting forward is well timed but it's a motion I'm concerned that we will walk away from Conference and something else will happen and we'll be reacting to that. So as Congress Trade Unions involved in health, I do believe that we are going to start telling the public a little bit more about what exactly is going on. We sign on to the Croke Park Agreement to make a difference in the Health Service, for our members to make a contribution to the health service that's there now and how it will change in the future under the current Government. And what we're seeing is lots of the old practices. We lost over two thousand people in the voluntary early retirement scheme and yet tax payers money is being paid to casualise health workers through the use of agencies and

through the abuse of agency labour and also the use of contract staff. That is not the way forward.

As far as I'm concerned working through congress with the congress group of unions we've got to decide on air strategy as a unified force and air key principles and key objectives and has to be that the public health service will be transformed but it will be done in a civilised manner and a sensitive manner and we as Congress Trade Unions have got to agree a number of principles. One is our member's jobs are not for sale and nor is the public health service and our members do a good job and we need to tell people that. We are part of the solution, not part of the problem. That's why we signed on and fought so hard for the Croke Park Agreement. Management at this stage are trying to write us out of the solution. We need to be clear to write ourselves back in and make sure that we will also help in delivering the public health service that the public deserve. I move the Motion. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Paul. Now any further speakers? No further speakers offering? I'm going to move to the vote on these Motions.

Motion 26 in the name of the Executive Council on Equality all those in favour please show? All those against. Abstentions. I declare the Motion carried.

Motion 27 in the name of UNISON on Protecting Welfare Systems. All in favour please show? All against? Abstentions. I declare the Motion carried.

Motion 28 in the name of the PCS in the campaign against Economic and Equality. All those in favour please show. All those against. Abstentions. I declare the Motion Carried.

Motion 29 on Investment and Health in the name of the IMO. All in favour please show? All against? Abstentions. I declare the Motion carried.

Motion 30 on Funding for people with Aspergers Syndrome in the name of the Guinness Staff Union. All in favour please show. All against. Abstentions. I declare the Motion carried.

Motion 31 in the name of USDAN on under-age sales. All in favour please show? All against? Abstentions. I declare the Motion carried.

Now can I remind Delegates, once again, especially those Delegates voting for me that the voting closes at 1pm and it's upstairs in the Standing Orders Room so can you ensure that your delegations have cast their votes by 1pm. I want to remind you once again Delegates that we are in very serious trouble with time and I'm very conscious of the fact that the representatives of the Retired Workers Committee have been waiting all morning to address Conference. I want to try to deal with Motion 32 before they do so and I want to call on the INMO to move Motion 32 and I want the movers of the amendment in the name of the NUJ to be ready to move as well please, if they could accommodate us. Thank you. David.

David Hughes, Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation

David Hughes, Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation proposing Motion 32 and indicating that we accept the amendment of the National Union of Journalists.

On the 31st of March this year our Government paid 3.1 billion of our money to Anglo Irish Bank, a dead bank and there're going to do that every year for the foreseeable future, paying back for our ridiculous bank bale out. We also had a bank stress test carried out this year and our Government has committed up to 9.5 billion towards stressed mortgages in ALB and Bank of Ireland so they will cost us, not the banks, if those mortgages fail. And what do we get? No sign of relieve for mortgage payers but an increase in interest rates.

To borrow a phrase from Fergus Whelan's book 'Decent into Treason' and to amend it slightly, workers were not born with saddles on their back and bankers were not born with boots and whip to ride them to hell either. The Congress message beamed up to us constantly throughout this conference is that Ireland's debt is unmanageable and it can't and shouldn't be paid and there are growing number of economists that are agreeing with that position and calling for default and all sorts of other variations of it. Our President Jack in his address asked how do we trigger the renegotiation of that debt? And of course we think of protests and strike action which is perfectly legitimate and should never be abandoned by the Trade Union Movement but look at the results in Ireland and in Greece where Governments were not persuaded by any level of action of that nature to change what was the pressure from the international banks and the IMF and the ECB for their money back. I think that is proof that it will take something extraordinary to pressurise a renegotiation on Ireland's behalf.

The President said in his address that people feel powerless. They have a fear of losing their homes. Well maybe we could turn that fear into real power for workers and mortgage payers in this country. I'm not talking here about individuals failing to pay their mortgage. We're proposing a collective action. We're proposing that it would be web based and that it wouldn't commence until one hundred thousand people had signed up and be prepared to go along with the action. The key to this campaign would be to separate your income stream and your savings from your mortgage account so that you have freedom over your ability to pay or not pay your debt. It then would involve a series of incremental actions which would allow for those who need to know that there is a collective action going on and that we can move in unity with financial transactions. And if that didn't shock them enough and cause enough ripples to renegotiate, then would we go, and only then would we go to a mortgage strike, and our demands? Well our demands should be relief for those people who were fooled into paying enormous prices for overvalued houses and for whom the bank funded those loans. Their residences, private principal residences should be reduced to reflect their actual value not that inflated value. Those who caused the financial crisis committed in my view financial treason. We must ensure that no one is ever allowed do that again by passing laws which prevent it. And we must have a charter of basic rights for people who live in this country, the right to healthcare, the right to accommodation and the right to education. Delegates we can turn the tide. We've heard a lot about the problems, we've heard a lot about what's wrong. We ourselves have the power to turn the tide. We need a broad based campaign, trade unionists and everybody else who is concerned about the future of this country and the people who live in it to join together and we need to take the fight to the banks, to the

European Central Bank and to the IMF and we need to fight them with what their beating us up with, our level of debt. We take the fight to them, we take them on. Let us lead the way. Support this Motion.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you David. Is there a seconder for the Motion? Secunder? Formally seconded. Thank you Delegate. Can I get the amendment now moved in the name of the NUJ?

Seamus Dooley, National Union of Journalists

President, I would first draw your attention to something which escaped eagle eye of SOC. The amendment is line 26 not 16 and that's point 2 referring to the Offences Against the State Act.

Delegates, I don't have to define treason to any one in this hall. Those of you who took part in the Congress rally in November 27th will have seen the treasonists act of those who booed and abused our President and General Secretary. Treason is something we all know about. As David has pointed out, treasonists acts have been committed by those whom we place our trust. The reason we've tabled this Motion is that we don't particularly like offences against the State Act. We are opposed to the concept of non jury courts and in particular we don't have much confidence of the capacity or the willingness of the judiciary on this particular issue. So we actually think of the use of the offences against the State Act would be unwise at that level, however we'd also point that if there were such a thing as financial treason I have no doubt that the rich and powerful, the people who Dick Walsh once called the sly and mighty. It would not be used against the sly and mighty, it would be used against the workers and it would be used to prevent industrial action and that is how it would be interpreted by those who would be charged with ensuring that the law is implemented. And all you have to do is listen to the words of Norma Prenderville yesterday when she indicated to you how the Competition Act had been used, not against the sly and mighty, but against the workers. So what we're saying is look at legislation which deals with proper regulation and implement regulation. Our friends in IBEC and in ISME in particular for many years advocated light touch regulation but you and I know what that meant, it meant taking us for a soft touch. I commend the Motion with the amendment as proposed. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, SIPTU and President

Thank you Seamus. Is there a seconder for the amendment? Secunder for the amendment? Is the NUJ going to formally second it? Formally seconded. Thank you Gerry.

So now the Motion 32 has been moved and seconded as has the amendment in the name of NUJ. I'm not going to be able to take speakers at this point in time. I will take speakers later on. We now have a number of speakers to address conference. I'll allow you to speak but I can't allow you to speak now. I have to move to take speakers Frank. You'll be here in the afternoon? I hope. I'm not going to take the motion. I'll deal with it later in the afternoon. I want now to move to take a number of speakers. The reason I want to do so is that standing orders provides that we will adjourn this session at 10 O'clock and we have a number of speakers who have been awaiting patiently to address us. First of all there are two speakers here to address us on behalf of the Retired

Workers Committees. The first is Margaret Galloway who is representing the Retired Workers Committee in Northern Ireland and I want to extend a warm welcome to Margaret who retired from the Inland Revenue service in Belfast after thirty three years' service. She had always been active in her union and served in the ICTU Women's Committee. On retirement she joined the Union's Retired Members Association and is now active in the PCS Associate and Retired Workers Committee in Northern Ireland. She is the President of the Northern Ireland National Pensioners Convention and the Executive Committee of the Age Sector platform in Northern Ireland and I'd like you Delegates to extend a very warm welcome to Margaret.

Margaret Galloway, Retired Workers' Committee, Northern Ireland

Good afternoon, President, Delegates and Comrades. I'm chair of the Retired Workers' Committee in Northern Ireland.

First of all I'd like to pay tribute to Peter Bunting and the Officers and staff of Congress in Belfast for the support given to the Committee. We are now very active group and are involved with other like-minded pensioner organisations in Northern Ireland. Workers ongoing with the Retired Workers Committee here in the Republic on a number of joint initiatives and issues and a North South meeting of the two retired workers committees was hosted in Liberty Hall by the President, Jack O'Connor.

In the Summer of 2009 we were involved with the UK Wide campaign led by the National Pensioners Convention for a decent state pension. This is particularly important for our region as we have far more pensioners solely dependent on the state pension, almost twice the UK average. I'm grateful for this opportunity to speak to you about the issues facing today's retired workers and which will also affect future generations of pensioners if action is not taken to reverse measures currently being introduced.

In Northern Ireland the change to the operating of UK pensions and benefits, from the retail prices index, to the almost always lower consumer prices index will have a devastating effect on current and future retired workers. Of a more immediate effect for today's pensioners will be the cut in the winter fuel payment by 50 pounds for those aged between 60 and 80 years and by 100 pounds for those aged over 80, this at a time when prices for all types of fuel are soaring.

The age sector platform, one of our partner organisations in Northern Ireland, this year held a series of pensioner parliaments throughout the country culminating in a two day event in Belfast. The results from surveys completed and voting at the parliament showed very clearly that the three things of most concern to older people were keeping warm in winter and the energy prices 75.4%, not enough money 65.7%, fear of crime 63.9%. The UN principles for older persons are independence, care, self-fulfilment and dignity. We must ask our Governments in both jurisdictions who presumably signed up to these principles how keeping pensioners in poverty, living in homes which they cannot afford to heat, with inadequate nourishment or care provision is delivering these fine aspirations. I would ask the support of the whole Trade Union Movement in our campaign for a better life for our retired workers. Don't forget our today is your tomorrow.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you very much Margaret and now I want to invite Michael Halloran who is representing the Retired Workers' Committee in the Republic of Ireland. Michael is coordinator of the Retired Workers' Committee in the Republic. He is a former Education and Training Officer of this Congress. He is co-founder and first CEO of the Irish Senior Citizens Parliament. He is a former Pensions Representative on the Pensions Board. He is a former Lord Mayor of Dublin. He is an honouree fellow of the Dublin Institute of Technology and I'd like again Delegates if you'd extend a warm welcome to Michael O'Halloran.

Michael O'Halloran, Retired Workers' Committee

President having listened to that introduction I'm glad Billy Attley kept you. He made a very good decision.

Delegates I come from the Retired Workers Committee. I'm not going to give you a long list of our complaints. They are already well documented in the Motion that you will consider later and documented in a report. I just want share with you, if I may, some of the insights of older people into the present crisis and how we faced crises in the past and how we got through them. The strength of the Trade Union Movement for me was always its commitment to human values. It never was an expert in very many things, the Trade Union Movement itself. We spoke like experts but weren't really experts. But we were expert in knowing what human life was about, the values attached to human life, to the young, to the old, to the married and so on. And it was those human values that sustained the Trade Movement in all of its problems and that's what will sustain it today, our commitment to those.

I would recommend you the next time you go to Dublin take a walk down Capel Street and hundred and fourteen sixteen Capel Street is the premises in which the first meeting of the Irish Trade Union Congress was held in 1894 and there it was interesting that on that agenda of that particular Congress was equal pay for equal work. It took a long time to achieve it but the women that attended that Congress they understood the value of women and their rights and they put that motion down and they kept working at it and working at it until it was achieved, or somewhat achieved. It's also interesting President and you might be interested in this. The Trade Unions then had no Press Officers, nobody wrote speeches for the delegates, but the most wonderful report of that Conference is in the daily papers of that time and they can be seen in the National Library, if you take a visit there, a wonderful report. And the report read the positive things, not negative things, I'll just share that with you.

The last thing I want to say is retired people are not dead people, we're civilised, we don't retire to die. There was a time when we did. When I was a baker, as I was many years ago, the retirement age was seventy and most people really knew they were retiring to die. They were already nearly dead in the bakery because it was such hard work. Today we retire to live and that is why we have a lot of needs that have to be realised if we are to live but we don't want to live just for ourselves, that's what I want to share with you. We are intergenerational, we have children who are unemployed, and we have children who are working too. We have grandchildren who may be unemployed if this crisis is not solved. We are intergenerational and what we want from the Congress, if I may say so President, we want to play a bigger role in the Trade Union Movement. Not

to dominate the Trade Union movement but to be there to help where we can. Volunteerism, we have time, we have no resources but we have time and we would like to make more of that time available and I give you one example of where that time could be put to good use for the Trade Union Movement. There's no reason why young people and older people could not cooperate in bringing the message of trade unions to schools. One, the youth haven't the enthusiasm and the old haven't the experience and the stories to tell. That would be a very good project. And older people, many older people would gladly do that because the one thing on our committee is that they love to talk, they love to talk and I want to also share with you another thing politically.

I've been a politician since I was a child. I'm fifty nine years a member of a Trade Union this year. That's a long time for an old fellow but I am. And our Chairman Paddy Donegan is seventy five years a member of a Trade Union this year and he's still a Chairman of a training committee for young disadvantaged people, an amazing man.

Anyway what I want to share with you is on our committee we have the left, the right, every kind of ideology but we don't fly on one wing. We feel that left wing and right wing is wonderful but you need a second wing and this is the wing the Trade Union Movement in our view will have to now develop strongly and that is a wing called common sense. We have to approach our problems with the experience of the past but not to do things so much or so badly that we would damage our movement and solve no problems. The methodology that we've had open to us through our whole existence has been collective bargaining and through what came the social partnership influencing Government and let nobody tell you that influencing Government is not important. Margaret knows that we influenced, first of all the Irish Government to give the inter cross border a pass and then they influenced the Northern Government to have the pass in the North and then we further influenced the Government to have a pass that was both for the thirty two counties. That's an incremental improvement but important for older people. So older people are saying to you be careful with using our methodology, influencing Government. That came through social partnership. All of us love the attacks on social partnership. Social partnership, we didn't use it as well as we could have maybe but it built an agenda of all kinds of things that are important to people. That we used to call in our young days, when we were young and we done some studies, the social wage. That wage is as important as the money wage. Mere money is not an answer to our needs. Standards of living are the answer to our needs and that's what we've learned from our experience.

Now Jack you'll be delighted to know that I'm going to conclude without the red light because I'm known to talk and talk and talk.

Jack O'Connor, SIPTU and President

I know you're trying to think of something to say Michael. Keep going.

Michael O'Halloran, Retired Workers' Committee

So I think Chairman, we have to be confident and we have to work together. I'm going to emphasise this again. We want to see Congress initiating the dialogue with the older people to see if there's some way we can advance this. Twenty years ago our Committee was founded. Fifteen years ago we adopted a policy the status of retired people in the Trade Union Movement. Wonderful things happened and in a way they didn't happen

and they need to happen and we're prepared not only to play our part with time but also maybe to try and find some way of resourcing this service to the retired workers of Ireland, not just of Congress but to all retired workers and we've been thinking about that, reflecting on it and that's why I came today. I also rang somebody this morning for advice on how to get publicity and he said throw an egg at Dave Begg. He won't get reports, nothing will be said in the papers about what he said but your name will be there but no that's not what we want.

We want our issues understood and Jack I congratulate you on your Presidency. You gave us a wonderful talk in Liberty Hall and like me you went on too long but it was a wonderful inspiring talk so President can I ask you maybe to bring back, I know you're not President but you will be on the Executive, if the vote goes right. One President by the way lost his seat in Belfast and he was a great President too, didn't get re-elected.

Jack O'Connor, President

Who's in charge of that red light?

Michael O'Halloran, Retired Workers' Committee

Jack if your re-elected I want you to do something for the Retired Workers. That Commission that I hadn't heard of until yesterday on Trade Union Organisation, they should talk to us. We have some ideas too because what we will bring to that dialogue is that why Trade Unions still are important to ordinary people. Thank you President.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you very much Mike. Now delegates who are somewhat perturbed at the way I interrupted the debate on Motion 32 will also be probably concerned that we're not in a position to move Motion 33 because I was most anxious to ensure that people we greatly respect such as Margaret and Michael, notwithstanding the suggests about throwing eggs, and other people we greatly respect, would have an opportunity to address Conference in the mornings session as they were scheduled to do and our next speaker is a champion for the struggle for social justice for very very many years.

Sr Stanislaus Kennedy is a religious Sister of Charity and one of Ireland's best known social innovators. Originally from Co. Kerry which is to our credit as well, she helped establish Kilkenny's social services in the 1960's and the 1970's. In the 1980's she founded and is Life President of Focus Ireland. In the 1990's Sr. Stan founded and is a Director of The Sanctuary. In 2001 she founded and is Director of the Immigrant Council of Ireland and Young Social Innovators. She is on the Board of the Community Foundation for Ireland. She is also a writer and some of her books include, 'Now Is The Time', 'A Bundle of Blessings', 'Gardening the Soul' and 'Seasons of the Day', 'Stillness' and more recently 'Moments of Stillness'. Sr. Stan has received numerous awards and tributes for her outstanding work for the marginalised in society and some of those are as follows. In 1981 she was nominated Kerry Person of the Year, in 1982 she received an Honorary Doctorate (end of tape some text missing) presented her with a special honour for commitment to the disadvantaged in Ireland. In 1996 she received the Lord Mayor of Dublin's Award. In 2003 she received an Honorary Doctorate in Law from the National University of Ireland. In 2004 she was awarded the Meteor Awards Prestigious Humanitarian of the Year, and in 2005 she received an Honorary Doctorate from the Open University, and it gives me great pleasure to welcome Sr. Stan and I'd like her to

address Conference now and if you would delegates extend a very warm welcome to a champion of the struggle of social justice.

Sr. Stanislaus Kennedy

Thank you very much President and Delegates. I'm very happy to be with you here with you this morning and thank you for the invitation. It's a great honour to address the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. And I'm particularly glad to address you because of the very important role you have played in getting the anti-trafficking campaign, Turn Off the Red Light Campaign off the ground and in helping to turn it into becoming the widest anti-trafficking initiative in Ireland.

Today I will speak to you about the Immigrant Council of Ireland and our work with regard to human trafficking. The Immigrant Council of Ireland grew up from being a good idea in the late 90's to now, today being a very important advocate for the human rights of migrants in Ireland. It has a very unique status in that it is an independent law centre and as such it has become a stake holder which policy makers have to contend with.

The Immigrant Council specialises in the legal representation of vulnerable migrants, particularly victims of human trafficking. Our interest in the area of human trafficking started way back in 2006 when cases were referred to us and they presented a challenge to us because of the legal complexity of the cases and because of the vulnerability of the people concerned. We took these cases very seriously and with funding from the Sisters of Charity we embarked on a major piece of research to inform ourselves with regard to the sex trafficking of migrant women in Ireland. The research is considered by many international experts as being ground breaking because we examined sex trafficking in the context in which it occurred, namely the Irish indoor prostitution. The report was launched in 2009 and its findings and recommendations are now part of the national action stand on human trafficking.

I will just briefly outline for you the findings of that report. The findings of the report dispel the myth that human trafficking does not occur in Ireland by uncovering concrete evidence of a hundred and two victims of the crime detected by frontline services over a period of less than two years. Because most shocking about those figures is that eleven of those women were children at the time they were trafficked. Since the launch of our research, two consecutive annual reports published by the Department of Justice confirmed the prevalence of sex trafficking in Ireland with fifty five victims detected in 2009 and fifty six in 2010. What is extremely concerning about that is that fifteen in the 2010 report were children and fourteen of them were found in Brothels. We know this is a gross underestimation of the scale of trafficking since it is only based on the number of women who manage to escape. Traffickers prey on the vulnerability of people the same way as pimps prey on the vulnerability of women in prostitution. They exploit their situation of poverty, of isolation and of fear and they bind them to their sickening business, pretending to be their friend and to be their saviours.

As I mentioned earlier we were interested to know more about the context and the environment in which human trafficking takes place, namely the Irish indoor sex industry. The report of these in Ireland in the 21st Century that is a thriving sex industry which is well geographically spread and has an impressive annual value of over a one hundred and eighty million Euro. At least a thousand women are available to be sold every day in

Ireland and the vast majority of them, up to 97% are migrant women coming from different countries. Fifty one countries were reported in 2009. Prices of the so called escort services are high and women are available to be ordered by phone or online. They are for sale in hotels, in private rented apartments and they can be ordered and delivered to client's homes.

The research did not shy away from the tough issues and an answer was sought to question who buys these women in Ireland? It appears that we have a relatively small minority of men who purchase sex. They are well earning men, often in relationships or married. The Immigrant Council of course dispelled another myth about prostitution, this time in relation to the buyers. As opposed to being ugly, lonely or disabled buyers actually tend to be successful professional, who are addicted to watching porn and have multiple sexual partners. These men are totally protected by Irish law. While women in prostitution can be convicted for keeping a brothel or living off the earnings of prostitution, men who buy sex indoors are not liable for any offence. Life in prostitution is about health and survival. Women are exposed to multiple fears and constant violence from buyers and procurers.

This quote which I will quote for you now illustrates best the long-term devastating effect of life in prostitution. This is from an interview with a woman that we carried out during the research. She says "I feel like nothing, I feel dirty, I feel confused and upset all the time. I want to get out of this work. I want a normal life. I am tired of all these lies, lies, lies to everyone, to my family, to my friends in Brazil. How could I go back? What could I say I have been doing? I do not want to lie but how can I tell the truth? I have lived inside this world, this universe and the normal world outside it is lost to me. I feel I have no future".

That comment by this woman is typical of what the women had to say during the research. The researchers used a number of recommendations around policies, around cooperation and services for women and it concluded the most efficient and proven way to tackle sex trafficking and prostitution is to go after the demand for prostitution. And the most important recommendation is to encourage legislators to tackle the demand for prostitution. This approach used in Nordic countries has a proven value and effectiveness. For Ireland this would mean a small legislated step as we have outlawed almost everything else with regard to prostitution. Yet it will be an enormous step in our thinking because for the first time we are focusing on the buyer.

In order to help us take this gigantic step a group of Irish Organisations and Unions came together and launched a campaign, The Turn Off the Red Light Campaign. This campaign recognises the practical advantages of the Nordic approach to prostitution regulation which has a twofold approach. Those who sell sex are decriminalised in recognition of their subordinate status and their limited life choice. And those who buy sex are penalised as a result of their unacceptable choice when purchasing vulnerable people. This message leads to decrease of prostitution and sex trafficking. Criminal organisers are less interested in operating in the territory of a State which has these laws. Most importantly such countries raise new generation of young people who believe that prostitution is incompatible with dignity and gender equality.

The Turn Off the Red Light Campaign has two main aims, firstly to raise awareness about the danger of prostitution and encourage people to demand its complete eradication. Secondly to urge the legislators to amend the outdated law of 1993 which criminalises everybody but the buyers of sex.

The first strong push for the campaign at national level came about in March 2010 when ICTU's All Ireland Women's Conference under the chairmanship of the INMO unanimously passed a motion to support Turn Off the Red Light and I would like to thank the Women's Conference for that and the support that we got then and since then and even this morning.

The initiative gained national permanence at a press conference earlier this year in February when five profile Irish men bravely spoke out against prostitution and the laws that tolerate it. ICTU's General Secretary David Begg and the Secretary of the TEEU Eamon Devoy were amongst the prominent speakers and I would like to thank them for that support and to thank the President Jack O'Connor for his great and appreciated support for the campaign.

Today we have over thirty partners in the campaign and our support is growing daily. In terms of our political lobbying we're at a stage where the Attorney General has issued an opinion on the criminalisation of buyers which is now with the Minister for Justice for consideration. We strongly hope that this move is possible as it is hard to imagine that our Constitution in any way protects the right of people to purchase other people and of course we will keep you informed as to how that progresses.

I encourage you to visit the website of the national campaign where you can see regular news and updates and also to use our Facebook page and show your support by liking it. Thank you very much for your attention this morning.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Sr. Stan. Thank you for your contribution today and thank you for championing probably the most vulnerable people, if there is something like a rank or order of vulnerability. And thank you as well Sr. Stan for your life as a champion of those who are vulnerable or oppressed in our society and thank you most sincerely Sr. Stan for keeping exactly to the time allocated. If only some would take a leaf out of your book.

Before Sr. Stan departs I want to acknowledge the activity of one of our delegates here, Betty Collard from the CPSU Delegation who has managed to raise during Conference seven hundred and fifty Euro for the Peter McVerry Trust and if you haven't already been nabbed by Betty she'll be coming your way in the next couple of hours and I think it's a worthy acknowledgement of the work of one Delegate who didn't miss the opportunity to do something useful for vulnerable people.

Now delegates it's exactly one o'clock if my time is right. We're going to adjourn and I'm urging delegates to be in the hall for five minutes to two because we have a very busy schedule in the afternoon and I also ask the Chair of Standing Orders, who has as I quite correctly pointed out earlier, was somewhat sanguine in declaring that it was his last address to Conference to convene his Committee and see what he can do for us in the afternoon. So back at five to two Delegates please. Thank you all.

Wednesday 6 July 2011 Afternoon Session

Patricia King, Vice President

Delegates I gather the guest speaker the Tánaiste is on his way so if delegates could take their seats I would be grateful. Thank you.

Michael Sharp, Chairman of the Standing Orders Committee

Delegates, Conference unfortunately my hopes that I might have finished this morning were unfulfilled so this is SOC Report No. 6, a verbal report and this will be my last report.

The first thing I have to tell you is that we had said that the reduction in speaking times would be the last thing we wanted to do. It is the last thing we are doing. Speaking times are now the recommendation is reduced to four minutes for a proposer, two minutes for a seconder and two minutes for any other speakers and we would again urge people to work well within those times, to formally second as far as possible and speakers only if it's really important to come forward. And to remind people that this red light, the orange light is supposed to indicate that you start finishing up, the red light indicates that you're finished. You don't start finishing at the red light.

As the Vice President said the Tánaiste is on his way. We will be taking the Tánaiste as soon as he arrives and we will then complete Motion 32 which was moved and the amendment was moved this morning so it's on the floor of Conference so Vice President will be taking speakers on that Motion and we'll complete that. Then move to the round table on Europe, that debate. When that is completed, it's scheduled to finish by 4 o'clock it may finish a little earlier than that we don't know. But whatever happens we will then move back to Motions 33 to 37 which fell off the agenda this morning and they will all be moved and seconded, and I've spoken to the movers and I've asked them to work well within the speaking times to as far as possible formally second and just have one speaker on each motion.

When those motions have all been put on the floor speakers will then be taken, it will be in the hands of the President as to how long that debate will last because we obviously have to leave time to take the International Solidarity Motion. The President will judge as to when to finish that debate, then we'll take the International Solidarity Motions.

Again all the Motions 38, 39, 40, the Emergency Motion and 41 will all be moved, seconded and again we will take speakers and again it will be in the hands of the President as to how long that debate will go on until he moves to the vote and then we move to the closing of the Conference. So that's our report. This is definitely my last report and I would reiterate all the thanks that I made this morning to my own union, former unions and everybody else that has helped me over the years. Thank you.

Patricia King, Vice President

Thank you Michael. Thank you very much. And that's agreed? That Report is agreed? Agreed. Thank you.

I think we're now ready for our guest speaker, the Tánaiste.

Jack O'Connor, Vice President

Now Delegates I have the honour of introducing our next guest speaker who bears the distinction of having served as Branch Secretary of my own union here in this county before he got better sense and he has of course as we all know led his party, the Labour Party, which was founded by the Irish Trade Union of Congress back in 1912. Only this year to the best election results in terms of seats gained in its entire history and you will recall delegates when I addressed the Taoiseach here, when he came to address us at the opening of Conference, you will recall that I alluded to the extent of the responsibility he bears which is an unenviable one.

I think in many respects the man I'm about to introduce bears even greater responsibility because his task is to try to ensure that the direction we take is not the direction that has been traditionally followed in this Republic of ours since the foundation of the State and that the direction we take is a direction which affords parity of esteem for the first time in our history to working people. I have great pleasure in introducing and I'd like you to extend a warm welcome to the Tánaiste, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Leader of the Labour Party, Deputy Eamon Gilmore, TD.

Deputy Eamon Gilmore, Tánaiste

Thank you very much President of Congress for your warm welcome. I'm delighted to be here and I'd like to thank Congress, Executive Council of Congress for inviting me to address the Biennial Conference of Congress. I'm delighted to see my good friend, colleague Michael D Higgins here and I hope he will, I know that Congress is not a nominating body for the Presidency but I hope that Michael D will enjoy the support of the entire Labour movement in his candidacy for President of Ireland.

I want to pay tribute to the work of Jack O'Connor as President of Congress and I want to welcome his successor Eugene McGlone and wish him every success in these very challenging times. I had the pleasure of addressing the Congress Biennial Conference two years ago in 2009 and since then I think it's fair to say that the political and economic landscape of our country has changed radically and probably irrevocably. The events of the past twelve months have been momentous. Ireland has been forced to seek foreign assistance to finance our economy and our State. There has been a General Election that has broken the mould of Irish politics and we've seen the formation of a new kind of Government Coalition of the two largest parties in the State in effect a National Government established with the aim of saving the national economy.

The events through which we have lived will no doubt be discussed and analysed by historians in years to come. But I've not come here today to talk about the past, our focus now must be on the future, on the scale and the nature of the task before us and the challenges that lie ahead. We know those challenges are great, restoring Ireland's economy and our economic independence, creating jobs for our people, reforming

Government and politics so as to restore trust among our citizens and doing it fairly. These are enormous tasks but the Government and the country cannot afford to fail. This Government has inherited a crisis which was a decade in the making. It is a crisis of such magnitude and such complexity that it has effectively put the new Government on a war footing with nothing left but our economic sovereignty at stake. The Irish people know the scale of our country's problems. They know that there are difficult days ahead and difficult decisions that will have to be taken. What I am determined is that this Government will apply itself to the task ahead with dogged determination. That we will tell people the truth about the path before us and that where there are hard decisions to be made we will be open and honest about why they are being taken.

If we are going to restore trust in public life and respect for public service, then respect has to be the corner stone of the Government's relationship with its citizens. The Irish people will allow for setbacks and after three years of recession they are no strangers to sacrifice. But what they will not forgive is a failure to face up to the task before us. As a country we will succeed or fail on the strength of our collective national effort. Sectoral interests including party political interests have to be set aside. Our overriding objective, the mission not only of this Government but of this generation must be to restore our economy and our independence and to do so in a way that holds the fabric of our society together.

Now I can't stand here today and say it will be easy. Government, social partners, civil society, individual citizens will be challenged to put the country's interest, that is to say the interests of all our people, our children and our grandchildren first. This Government has been elected to lead, to show the way but we can only succeed if leadership is shown by others too, business groups and unions, those in the public sector, those in the private sector, voluntary groups and community leaders. This is not a zero sum game where my opponents loss is my gain, we will all lose or we will all gain on the back of our collective effort.

For its own part, since taking office, this Government has taken action to repair our economy on four fronts. Firstly we have made the necessary decisions to stabilise Ireland's banking system. The results of the stress tests and further recapitalisation may have been less than palatable but the perception is taking hold that we are finally drawing a line under the disaster in our banking system. In future Ireland will have two pillar banks that are focused on the needs of the real economy, including the capacity to provide credit to the economy, even as they are downsized and part of this recapitalisation we are seeking contributions from bond holders and as far as this Government is concerned that includes senior bond holders in Anglo and Nationwide.

Secondly we have set about the task of restoring the public finances. Brendan Howlin has established a comprehensive spending review that will look at all areas of public spending. This is not a rerun of An Bord Snip Nua which simply asked where can you cut? Rather it requires an entirely different mindset. The challenge of the comprehensive expenditure review lies in interrogating not only how we spend less but also how we can do more and how we can achieve our objectives differently. That does not mean that there won't be tough decisions to make, there will but at the end of this process we must come out with a leaner, reformed, more flexible public service that looks to the future with confidence.

Thirdly we have done the work of rebuilding our reputation and our relationships with the wider world. There is no doubt that Ireland's reputation was damaged during the recession and it must be restored if we are to successfully trade and export, if we are to continue to attract investments in jobs, if we are to get back into the financial markets and if our Government is to negotiate effectively on behalf of our country.

In our short time in office, Ireland's reputation has begun to rise again. We have made it clear that Ireland is willing to play its part in dealing with this great economic crisis and what we ask is that others will play their part also. I'm conscious in saying so that Ireland must shoulder its fair share of the blame for creating the problem, for a profound failure of economic management during the boom and its series of disastrous decisions in the fall out from the crisis. Ireland has been a beneficiary of European solidarity without which we would have been unable to fund the State. Having accepted our share of the blame for creating the problem, it should also be acknowledged that Ireland is now doing its part to contribute to its solution. The Irish people have endured a massive fiscal correction. Our EU IMF Programme is on track and we are demonstrating our willingness to take the necessary actions to restore Ireland's credit worthiness. Of course this is in Ireland's own interests. But it should be acknowledged that in doing so we are contributing to solving what is also very much a European problem. And what is needed now is to progress towards a European wide solution.

Fourthly we have made it clear that we will prioritise jobs and growth. From the beginning of this month a number of the provisions of the jobs initiative have come into force including the vat cut for tourism and some other sectors, the jobs bridge internship scheme, right across the country this summer there will be jobs supported and created through capital spending on schools, traffic schemes on non-national roads.

The restoration of the National Minimum Wage also takes effect from the beginning of this month. It was a priority for this Government which we made clear when we successfully renegotiated that part of the bail out with The Troika. This and the Jobs Initiative shows that where there is the will and where there is the imagination we can make fair choices and encourage job creation. I want to say a few words about those choices. I said at the beginning that this crisis has put the new Government on a virtual war footing. That we're going to have to take unprecedented steps if we are to restore our sovereignty and grow our economy. This is true, particularly in the immediate term. In the coming budgets we will have to take measures to narrow the chasm in our public finances. But our choices about the longer term recovery of our economy are equally important and we need to make them carefully. Again we need to take them together and this was emphasised by the Taoiseach in his address on Monday to you when he noted that the approaches taken by Trade Unions, by employers and by the Government should be consistent with each other and with the needs of an economy struggling to grow employment.

Social partnership played an important role in the Irish economy over two decades, particularly in maintaining industrial peace and in enabling economic growth. In these tough times dialogue with unions and employers on what it will take to achieve lasting economic recovery is more important than ever. This Government will talk with unions and employers and we will work to have an understanding with both that will facilitate

recovery. This process of engagement will of necessity include dialogue on the future conduct of industrial relations and of collective bargaining in line with commitments in the programme for Government because ultimately the road to recovery is one that we must travel together.

As the Taoiseach also noted the Government is in the process of deciding on the nature of reforms in the wage setting machinery of the State. There is a consensus on the need for some reforms of JLC's, Registered Employment Agreements and Employment Regulation Orders for some time, reform that is supported by Congress, and I want to take this opportunity to commend Congress for its engagement on this issue to date.

The responsive Government to the job of economic recovery is a measured one, and one that looks to the future, to the kind of economy that we want to build. An economy that is flexible enough to adapt to change in global markets and one that is built on good quality sustainable jobs that offer our people a decent living. Our objective must be to achieve both. Restoring our national competitiveness is important and we've already made progress. Prices and rents have fallen though there is more to do, particularly in relation to commercial rents. Average labour costs growth rates have slowed since 2008 and are behind those of the EU 27 and Euro zone. This moderation of wages reflect the lived experience of workers in the public and private sectors of the last for the past three years. Where that moderation has been left evident however, is in the very high pay levels that prevailed during the boom creating an ever widening gap between those in the sheltered sections of the economy, the banks, the professions and those in the lower paid most vulnerable parts of the economy.

The Government and the public service has taken a lead on the issue of pay for senior management. Government Ministers and Senior Public Servants have reduced their pay further, while Minister Brendan Howlin has introduced measures to rein in executive pay in the semi state sector. We will be looking to the private sector and the sheltered sectors to play their part too. To show that wage moderation is not something that is only done by those on modest wages. But building a sustainable economy, one built on decent jobs and decent work for decent pay requires us to make more far reaching reforms. We have to look at how our State and our public services are geared towards up skilling our labour force and educating our young people. How they support enterprise and innovation. How they are ready for the kinds of challenges that are coming down the track, from adapting to climate change to caring for an aging population. In particular, the response of our public services to the crisis of long term unemployment is critical. If we are progressive in our aims then we cannot be conservative in our actions and there is nothing progressive in leaving people trapped on social welfare. The reform is being undertaken by Minister Joan Burton in activation and by Minister Ruairi Quinn in training are among the most important this Government can make and they have to be made in the context of our very real budget constraints. This is why public service reform is so important. Not an excuse to put the State into retreat but an imperative if we are to improve the opportunities of our fellow men and women even in these extremely difficult times. And there is a greater prize here. The creation of a new relationship between the people and the public service, were people are once again willing to invest in the public sphere because they are convinced that the public services lean and efficient acts in their interests and can deliver.

When I last spoke to you in Tralee in 2009 I laid out an aspiration for a very different economy, a different society and different politics that would enable them. Two years later my party is part of a National Government united in the people's interest and focused on national recovery. It is a privilege to hold such office but it is also a great responsibility and I am determined and the Government as a whole is determined to do the job that the people have asked of us. To put our economy back on the road to recovery, to restore pride to our people, and most of all to end our term of office with our country in a much better place than it is in today. Thank you very much.

David Begg, General Secretary of Congress

Tánaiste I want to join with the President in welcoming you and thank you for taking the time to come down and see us here in Killarney and thank you for your very fine address which I think was eagerly listened to by the delegates here and regarded as being extremely important. I think I should mention to the delegates first of all Tánaiste that the President and myself and yourself had a conversation for a little while before the beginning of this session of Congress, and we did raise with you a number of human rights issues of concern, particularly in relation to the Flotialla and also in relation to the treatment of medical staff in Bahrain and you assured me that these matters are receiving your active attention, so I think Conference will be glad to hear that is the case.

Can I assure you also I that Michael D is held in very deep affection in the Labour Movement and while I should quite rightly point out Congress is an underlying body but I'm quite sure that a lot of the people in this room will be doing their level best to ensure that he assumes the highest office in the land.

I want to acknowledge as well Tánaiste by the way the achievements that you have outlined in your speech, including relation to the minimum wage. We are very much aware, everybody in the County I think, is very much aware at the moment of the debate which is taking place within Government in relation to the joint labour committees. I don't have to tell you this is an issue of defining importance I think for us because I think it will truly, if you like, set the priorities for how the Government is going to deal with a very difficult crisis which we are facing and simply what our view is that people at the bottom on socio economic spectrum should not be the people who bare the brunt of the adjustment that has to take place and we have every confidence, I must say, that you and the party will ensure that there is a just result out of that dialogue in Government.

I want to thank you particularly for your reference to the collective bargaining commitment which as you quite rightly say you outlined to us in 2009 and indeed you put it into the Labour Party Election Manifesto and you ensured that it was contained in the programme for Government and you have made reference to it again today and I think by any standards you record on this has been absolutely consistent. We appreciate it. We thank you for it and again you have our very best wishes in trying to ensure that ultimately it is resolved in a way which restores to every worker in the country the basic human right I suppose that every other European citizen enjoys and thank you for that.

Now of course we do recognise the practicalities of operating in the Government. It would be difficult enough I suppose in normal circumstances but you face enormous problems and not alone that your into an arrangement which I suppose it's a little bit like how Princess Di once described her marriage, it's very difficult when there are three

people involved in it and the third party I had in mind was the IMF and the ECB and EU people coming in so we're practical people, we're conscious indeed of just how difficult that is and we don't expect miracles, well not quite miracles, close enough anyway will do.

And you referred to the Conference in 2009 and I think your speech to that Conference was a very important speech there was a very interesting debate to that Conference which you were probably not privy to subsequently when delegates discussed the whole question of the political orientation, if you like, of the trade union movement in the context of the events which were unfolding post 2008 and there was a resolution passed at the Conference urging affiliated unions to basically give their support to the Labour Party and it was constructed on the basis of an evaluation which said if we look at our history and we go back to the 1918 election as Jack referred to indeed in his Presidential address yesterday at how Labour stood aside on that occasion and on the subsequent years when we had the Irish Trade Union and Labour Party Movement together until 1929 and if you think of how the polity of the country evolved in the intervening years and the damage that was done by the fact that every issue in Ireland was conceptualised I think in terms of independence, setting aside seeing the problem in terms of class and the emergence of the type of politics which would be common in generally continental European countries and that has acted to the disadvantage of the Labour Party and of the Labour Movement. And we see also, and again this is a point Jack highlighted, that three times in sixty years this country has looked into the abyss which must raise the question for everybody is the polity which we have followed the correct one, is the economic model the correct one? And I think it is there is a realisation, hopefully, that that is not the case and we have to look to other means of charting our future and the possibility of realising for the first time in Ireland a social democratic quality in a way that has never taken hold up to now. And there is the motivation for the Congress and for the decision it has taken and it was driven out very strongly by the President of Congress using his office to ensure that that Motion that was passed was given full effect to in the election which followed and I think it got considerable support and actually found a resonance really with everybody looking at the situation as it was unfolding.

And really it was a concern I think that we had to move to this new model of a comparison with the small democracies of Northern Europe which are social democratic and are extremely successful and which achieved the best results in social and economic policy when there was a combination of Labour Party or Social Democratic Party incumbency and a strong Trade Union Movement and that is what we must strive for.

This is a time of course of enormous difficulties for us, but it is a time I think also for some opportunity. The difficulties we know very well. Indeed in terms of the economy we are very worried Tánaiste about as you might expect here and it featured very strongly in the economic debate all this week. And it's interesting actually just on that point this morning, you know the financial times which is the organ really of capitalism in the world today and it is making the point that for Ireland to get back into the money markets again would require almost our debt to be cut in half, would require really to write off about a €107 billion before we could get into those markets on terms that would be bearable to use it's words. And if I can quote very briefly from what it said, it said the following and this is an article by Martin Wolfe. He said "moreover the more successful a country turns out to be in cutting its costs the worst the debt burden becomes. Thus debt restructuring is merely a necessary condition for an exit it is unlikely in all cases to be enough. Some economies

may just wither away” and this is a huge worry we actually have, that all of the austerity will really cause the airspeed of the aircraft, if you like, to stall and drive the economy completely into the ground. And he goes on to say “but if there is to be any change of avoiding this outcome realism is required. At some point the present value of the cost of debt must be drastically lowered. This does not have to happen today but it has to happen sometime soon to give people hope and in its absence failure is not just likely, it is close to certainty”. So our policy has really been a twofold one, we believe and indeed there is the platform of the Labour Party in the General Election Campaign that we need more time to achieve the fiscal adjustment. We realise we have to do it but we have to do it in a way which allows growth to take hold in the economy and the growth itself can do some of the heavy lifting because as Wolfe says if you don’t do that actually the whole thing becomes self-defeating.

(Knocks over the microphone) I’m a little bit nervous there was a fellow up here earlier on threatening to throw eggs at me so just in case.

So anyway on the question of the debt itself we believe ultimately there should be a European solution to that. I think it is just too great a burden for us to get ourselves out of and we support you very much. We know of your efforts to try to get a renegotiation of that burden. We’re practical enough to know that you can’t come to a public forum today and express everything that you feel in relation to this but you know we know that that’s what you want to do, that we’re on the same wavelength and we hope ultimately that you will be successful.

As I said I think it’s a very bad time. It is a time for some opportunity as well. A time maybe for the whole Labour Movement to be brave in a way and take some risks and to be united above all to get the result at the end of the day that we have in the whole history of our state aspired to and never achieved. The alternative as I said here at the debate here yesterday is the danger ultimately of reverting to the old politics in Ireland where the Labour Party is just a minority party forever or worse still where you have the emergence of a kind of authoritarian right wing nationalism which would be even more destructive. This is the opportunity, we have to realise maturely I think in this movement and hopefully in the party that together we have to work for that social democratic polity which will give us a decent and just society and thank you again Eamon for everything you’re doing.

Jack O’Connor, President

Thank you David and I want on behalf of Conference to thank the Tánaiste for accepting the invitation to address us here today. I want to thank him for his address and I want to just refer to his reference to collective bargaining in the course of his address. There is a point in relation to this that is always missed and it’s this. That the collective bargaining issue is the issue that determines a fundamental question and the question is as to whether working people will have a say in this country where it counts, where the dividend is being decided. And thus far, in the history of our State, notwithstanding the democratic programme, that entitlement to be present when the dividend is being decided has never been acknowledged or afforded to working people.

When the Tánaiste addressed us in 2009 he declared that he would ensure that that entitlement would be acknowledged in any programme, for any Government that he

would be part of and for the first time in the history of our State the programme of the current Government includes a commitment on the entitlement of working people to participate in collective bargaining and that is as a result of the fact that the Tánaiste and the party he leads were part of shaping that programme for Government and that is also acknowledgement of the fact that the Tánaiste is a man of his word. Not just to the Trade Unions but to the people who would wish to be in Trade Unions or the people who might wish otherwise to have a say. And I want to thank him for acknowledging the commitment that he made and for honouring the commitment that he made and I want to express the hope to him as he leaves that before his Government leaves office that that entitlement to be present when the dividend is being decided will for the first time in the history of our State be afforded working people and I hope it happens before we celebrate the Centenary of the 1913 Lockout when the employers of the country try to smash one of the organisations that had been established to try to ensure that working people would be present at the place where the dividend is being decided.

I want to thank the Tánaiste again for his address and I want to wish him well for his work in discharging the enormous responsibilities that he has assumed and no better man to assume them. So thank you Tánaiste.

Patricia King, Vice President

Now will move on now to take Motion 32 which was moved, amended and the amendment was accepted, so it's the amended motion that we're going to deal with now and I gather that there are a number of speakers who wish to come forward on that so can we deal with that business please as per the Standing Orders Report which Michael gave us just before our guest speaker, thank you. Can we have speakers please?

Frank Barry, UNITE

Conference, Frank Barry, Unite moving remittance of this Motion and you might very ask us why? This Motion makes a series of demands to be implemented by Congress without debate or discussion. The opening paragraph states that our limitations on the use of mass protest and strikes and that the media attack us. So what! We expect it every time we go on strike, we expect it when we go on mass protests particularly when we're looking for our rights and the demands of our movement. However it goes on then to vow to fight and challenge the imposition of debt on generations to come and we ask the question how are we going to do this? It goes on to call on Congress to implement three demands that all mortgages are reviewed downwards to current market value. How are we going to achieve it? We would need a team of lawyers, economists, financiers to develop a scheme to do this alone. What about those who already have paid their mortgages?

Number two is a demand that we create a new offence under the offences against the State Act of financial treason. First of all we don't accept the piece of legislation they are talking about and how do we define financial treason? My memory was it was a turn of phrase used in the Dáil in a debate, one of these clichés. Then we have a demand for a chart of right it alone would demand all the resources of Congress for the next two or three years to come up with such a charter. We're demanding a strategy which will use the new power of workers to curtail the Government and the markets. Somebody tell me what new powers have we got? I'm not aware of any of them and finally we demand that Congress organise a mortgage repayment strike. I suggest to you I don't think

Congress has the authority under its Constitution to organise such a strike. I ask you to support remittance.

Patricia King, Vice President

Thank you speaker. Now are there other speakers? Do we want the right to reply? Oh we have a speaker.

Deirdre Quinlan, CPSU?

Good afternoon Delegates. I've left the notes so that I can be brief. I'm here to support Motion 32. I think this is a defining moment for the Trade Union Movement. This is a moment to define what we are and what we believe in. Yes as Trade Unionists we're here for our own self-interest, that's a given. But there's a collective thread, a thread of solidarity. One of the worst words that has come out of the narrative of the crisis has been one of moral, what do they call it when people have a mortgage which they cannot pay back? What's the word? Moral hazard. How anyone in this country tolerates a fellow citizen being called a moral hazard is beyond me and if we do nothing we should render that word despicable. It should be never allowed be used on a television programme to define an individual in this country who cannot pay their debt. Not because they don't want to but because they are rendered incapable of it. We need to look at this motion, to embrace it, to give it a chance. I think this again is a defining moment. Naturally we are afraid. We seem to be very afraid to take decisive action, afraid of the consequences. We're a little bit like mice squeaking in the attic, we're an irritation but they can live with us. I think this motion gives us an opportunity to roar. We want a fairer better way. We want it now. It's not good enough to have it in two, six, ten years. If there is a drive to the far right it won't come because the left mobilised. It will become because the left did nothing. I would urge you please support the motion.

Patricia King, Vice President

Thank you speaker. Okay right of reply?

Dave Hughes, Irish Nurses and Midwives' Organisation

We are opposed to this being remitted. We think it is time for the Trade Union Movement to decide whether we're actually going to take any action in the face of the austerity measures and whether we're going to take on this crisis of debt as being imposed on us people who call for default and give no bargaining power to our Government or anybody else to negotiate default or even reorganise our debt are only horrors on the ditch. We're either serious about getting this Government to renegotiate those bad deals for Ireland or we're not. If we're serious vote for this Motion. Thank you.

Patricia King, Vice President

Thank you speaker. Now I'm going to move now to put the Motion as amended to the floor of Congress. Secunder for remission? We're going to do the remission first okay. So we're going to take the vote in relation to the remission so all those in favour of the remission? Now we may need Tellers. All those against? Sorry if I may ask you to do that again just to be absolutely sure. All those in favour of remission please? All those against? Against remission thank you. So now I'm going to go for the moving of that motion as amended. So I'll put the Motion to the floor. All those in favour of the motion as amended? All those against? Thank you very much. Abstentions. No abstentions. Thank you very much. The motion is carried. Now I'll hand over to Jack.

Jack O'Connor, President

So thank you Patricia. And now we're going to proceed to the schedule of business for the afternoon which entails a Round Table Discussion on Which Way for Europe and I just want to introduce the participants.

First of all this round table is going to be chaired by Sharon Burrows and just to introduce Sharon. She became the second woman in May of 2000 to be elected President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions. In December 2004 Sharon was the first woman to be elected President of the World Union Body, the ICFTU which represents 148 million workers in 231 affiliated organisations across 150 countries. In October 2000 Sharon also became the first woman to be elected President of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, Asia Pacific Region Organisation. In 2006 she was elected as President of the International Trade Union Confederation at the ITUC founding congress in Vienna. Sharon was born in 1954 in Warren, a small town in Western New South Wales into a family with a long history of involvement in unions and the struggle to improve the lives of working people. And in June the 25th 2010 she was elected General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation. She is an extremely busy person and it's a great privilege indeed to have Sharon here to chair this discussion this afternoon and I think it would be appropriate that we extend a very warm welcome to her.

Now we also have Maria-Helena André who has been a member of the Portuguese Parliament since June of 2011. She had a number of Government functions from October 26th 2009 until June 2011. She was Minister for Labour and Social Solidarity of the 18th Constitutional Government of Portugal. She's been Deputy Secretary General of the European Trade Union Confederation responsible for the European social dialogue and the European social policy and relations with the ILO and the Council of Europe between the years 2003 and 2009. She was Confederal Secretary of the ETUC responsible for Labour Market Policy, Vocational Educational Training, Regional Policy and Interregional Trade Union Committees from 1999 to 2003. She was Confederal Secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation responsible for Labour Market Policy, Education and Vocational Training, Community Structural Funds, Social Exclusion, Racism and Xenophobia between 1995 and 1999. And she was Confederal Secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation responsible for Labour Market Policy Education and Vocational Training Youth, Racism and Xenophobia also between 1992 and 1995. And as I've said she's been re-elected to her seat in the Portuguese Parliament as and from June 2011. So I'd like if you would delegates extend a very warm welcome to Maria-Helena.

We also have Ronald Jansen who is Economic Adviser to the ETUC on European Macro Economics on the Lisbon Agenda, European Coordinator of Collective Bargaining, Research Development and Innovation and Industrial Policy. Ronald has an extensive background in the Trade Union Movement having worked with the ETUI in the area of Collective Bargaining and also with the ACV-CSL white collar union in Belgium on Macro and Micro Economic issues and he has published a number of papers and recently participated in the May Day series in Dublin on the Competitiveness Pact. So Ronald is an old friend of our Trade Union Movement and he's very welcome here today again here at Congress.

And we have Nat O'Connor, Director of TASC, this is the progressive think-tank that's been established for a number of years. Nat has taken over the role of Director since January

2011 having previously worked there as a Policy Analyst before joining TASC Nat led the research team and the homeless agency for three and a half years. He has also worked as a consultant to local Government on the development of statistic reporting of service indicators and has retained as an occasional lecturer in the Department of Applied Social Studies in NUI Maynooth and Nat has an MA in Political Science and Social Policy from Dundee University and a PHD in Political Science from Trinity College Dublin. He is a strong believer in the role of research and evidence-based policy making in combating inequality and I'd like to say as well that Nat has recently coordinated and directed in TASC the preparation of a critic on the McCarthy Report on the State Assets which we intend to publish shortly. So I'd like to welcome Nat as well.

And finally, I want to welcome Dr Mícheál Collins who was a Lecturer at the Department of Economics, Trinity College Dublin, and a native of Ennis in County Clare. He is a Graduate of NUI Galway, UCC and the University of Dublin, Trinity College. His research interests are in the areas of the Income Distribution, Taxation, Economic Evaluation, Public Policy and Development. Previously he worked at the University of Limerick, the Hibernian Economic Consultants and the Institute of Public Administration. Mícheál is the Vice Chairman of the Irish Social Policy Association and a former Chairman of the Regional Studies Association of Ireland. He was a member of the Commission of Taxation and served as Chairman of the Commission Subgroup on Tax Expenditures and Tax Breaks. In 2011 he was appointed a member of the Government Advisory Group on Tax and Social Welfare and we shortly hope that he will be working closely with us. I'd like to extend a very warm welcome to Dr Mícheál Collins as well.

And now I want to hand over to the Chairmanship of this discussion to Sharon Burrows, General Secretary of the ITUC, Sharon.

Sharon Burrows, General Secretary ITUC

Thank you very much and indeed good afternoon to the delegates. Well this debate 'Which Way For Europe' is actually the question you're all asking. You know that Ireland is in the middle of a very difficult situation and that means your leadership and the debates here for the last couple of days are significant in terms of the future direction that you will advocate and that the country will take. Of course your worried about not just the impact on your own wages, your own jobs, your own services, your own pensions but in fact what happens over time if the conditionality opposed on the bale out of Ireland means that there is every risk of economic crisis continuing into the future. So these are serious areas of debate. I know right around Europe and Bernadette is in the audience and she'll be talking to you as the Secretary of the ETUC but right around Europe, we are seeing a tax on labour rights, we're seeing a tax on jobs and services through austerity measures, we're worried about the fall in wages and it's subsequent, not just an impact on living standards, but workers but indeed the impact on demand and growth.

We know that the vulnerability of the economy out there is still very very serious and it's working people who are the victims now of what was a crisis instigated by corporate and particularly financial sector greed. So your people are angry, you're angry but you're also trying to find, as David said, the maturity as a movement to get the answers to the policy questions that you want to promote to set yourselves and your children and your grandchildren up for the future.

So just as you're talking about these issues, as you're debating them with your members we have a panel here of distinguished individuals who are in fact going to be asked to address the big questions. What is really happening in Europe? Is it possible to keep the Euro zone intact? Is deeper European integration an inevitable consequence of sticking with the Euro? How is Ireland perceived by other countries? What is the global dimension to the fallout in Europe in terms of a stable global economy and what can unions and workers do to influence the course of the event? If we had all of the answers, in fact as Maria is smiling about, we would actually be making sure that the bond markets and their cousins the ratings agents aren't back in control of a global economy that's not working for working people. But we do have some experience. We do have some knowledge. We do have some understanding of what kind of world we want to shape and we have every right, every right to set the policy landscape and advocate it in the interest of a better future. So Maria with that smile because you've been in the middle indeed of the heat and a colleague of ours of whom we're very proud of taking on such a major role in the Portuguese Government, going through a tumultuous election, what's your perspective on these big questions?

Maria Helena André

Thank you very much Sharon. Good afternoon to all of you. I think one of the main features of the times we're living in today is the quick pace of change. When I was invited to address your Conference and take part in this panel I was still a Minister and this was not a long time ago and today I am a Member of the Parliament. This shows the instability into which countries are living in and in the case of Portugal, together with an economic financial and social crisis we were confronted with adding to that a political crisis, a political crisis that was created by the refusal of further left wing and right wing parties in Parliament to refuse any continuation of any austerity measures which would have allowed the country not to have to ask for external support.

So what I've heard already this afternoon about the need to restore the independence and to restore the capacity for having the countries deciding which are their polity options and which way they want to go is something which is very close to my heart and it's something which I will never forget in my life due to irresponsibility from the part of policy makers and politicians having to subject a country to ask for external support. Now who's fault is it when a country needs to ask for external support? Well in the case of Ireland we had elections and you went exactly the opposite way we went in Portugal. We had a Labour Government and now we have a right wing Government. You had a Central Government and now you have a coalition with the Labour Party and I think that this shows a little bit the uncertainty and the confusion which builds in people's minds trying to grasp and to understand who's to blame and how do we get out of this situation? And as I was saying I think many are to blame. I don't think that we can put all the blame about the situation of our countries into a lack of response by Europe. But certainly there is a responsibility of Europe in failing to understand that impact of the crisis in Europe. But also at the same time a lack of capacity from the part of national governments, not just to regulate and control the work of financial institutions both nationally and internationally and more recently to put some order into this rating agencies whom we don't know who they are, who they work for but have the capacity to put into upheaval many countries in the world but I think also a lack of capacity of European Government and of European Unions who sufficiently grasp the impact of the globalisation process, which is ongoing and to a certain extent Europe has always been arrogant in thinking that it could survive.

Keeping intact its way of doing and its way of being and for that reason I don't think that we were quick enough to answer to the result of the economic crisis. And for that reason I think we've done too little, we've done too little too late and that is one of the reasons why we are in such a situation but also at the same time I think that at a national level we have never sufficiently addressed the witnesses of our economy and we did not prepare our economies to change in the development models. And I'm wondering and I'm asking myself can we do that nationally, each country by itself? And I think the answer to that when I was listening to the debate this morning and also days on my previous experience in the Trade Union Movement it's clear to say that we will never be able to do that on our own. No country will be able in European Union to overcome the difficulties if we do that by our self. Of course a part of the answer needs to lie on capacity to implement the right strategies and the right policies at the national level and I assure you it makes the difference between having a left wing and a right wing Government. We have seen that in Portugal with the way that measures were being undertaken by a Labour Government in the sense of keeping a certain level of social justice and a certain capacity to answer to the needs of those who were most targeted by the crisis and what we see today with just the presentation of the programme of the new Government which is attacking directly at the heart of something which is very dear to us and which is very dear to Ireland and which is also at the centre of your discussions today and that is the right to bargain collectively by Trade Unions and imported organisations. And what we see in Portugal today as one of the first measures by this right wing Government is to say we need to make industrial relations more individualised because that's the right way to be competitive in this global economy. And that's exactly the same type of process that you have been undergoing in Ireland regarding the attacks on collective bargaining.

A second thing which make the difference between a right wing and a left wing government is exactly on something I've also heard a lot about this morning and already this afternoon, it is the need to promote social dialogue, the need to promote change through social peace and through the active participation of the social partners. Two days before my Government resigned we finalised an agreement with social partners on the competitiveness and the labour market conditions of the Portuguese economy. The contents of that agreement is part of the deal with the Troika that we had to sign. If we had not had that agreement signed two days before the Government resigned and one week before we asked for external support we would have had much more serious consequences in the agreement we would have made with the Troika then the ones we had, so clearly social partnership and the capacity to bring the social partners to the discussions and to negotiate is also very important also to answer to this crisis. So regarding your answers Europe is part of the solution but Europe is also part of the problem. I think that if we had not been in the Eurozone the consequences would probably have been much more difficult that they are but we could have had other instruments that we don't have today to manage our monetary economy and at the same time clearly part of the answer needs to lie on our capacity to change our model of development and on our capacity to do that together. I think European Union at this moment is at a crossroad and either we are able to get out of this in unity or we may face the possibility of disrupting what has been European project. I don't think that is in the interest of working people across Europe.

Sharon Burrows, General Secretary ITUC

I think Maria raises some very valuable points, the failure of Europe to understand the impact of the crisis on the Euro zone, the lack of thoughtful progress around the development model that accommodates the impact of globalisation. You call it a new development model Maria, we call it an alternate growth strategy but it's the same thing. How do you as David challenged actually provide for growth while we actually stabilise the fiscal and the monetary frame of our economies and they're big questions and at the heart of that for us is of course jobs, jobs and jobs. Because with youth unemployment in Portugal on top of the high levels of unemployment for the rest of the community in Greece, in Spain, in Australia, right across the world, youth unemployment is now the threat of a future for our children which is pretty bleak but it's also an economic threat as well as a social threat to stability, and so somewhere in that alternate growth model must be a target on jobs, surely and of course Maria also raised the issue of the income base of any economy and the right to, as Jack said the dividend, to be part of the debate about the dividend and how it's distributed at the bargaining table. So from previous of course leader of our own movement, Maria Helena to Ronald Jansen, what are your answers to the big questions?

Ronald Janssen, ETUC

Well first of all thanks to the Irish Congress for inviting me and also thanks for all these interesting questions and make it possible to provide some interesting remarks as well. I won't take them all because it would take too much time.

I will take three questions and the first question was what is really happening in Europe? Well it's obvious for all to see that Europe or certainly major parts of Europe are facing a debt crisis. Debt whether it's private or public is simply to hide in a big number of countries. However what is ... end of tape some text missing...to borrow so much, countries needed to run up these high debt burdens because they are running also external deficits, deficits on the trade with other countries. These deficits needed to be financed by borrowing from abroad but these deficits, current account deficits are actually a symptom of the fact that the countries are not competitive. Well this may sound like a technical explanation but let me put it more bluntly, in more simple terms. The official view in the end is that the story of this crisis is not about irrational financial markets feeding into a high asset price boom. The official story of the crisis as pursued by the Commission Finance Ministers ECB is that the crisis is about irresponsible workers, irresponsible trade unions, and eroding competitiveness of the different countries by pushing wages too high. Now that may sound shocking to you but unfortunately it becomes even more shocking because this is not only the analysis of official polls who make it around Europe, they are also following up this analysis by action, and if you look at the different types of European policy processes and actions there is one red line running through all of this and that red line is to say wages have to become much more flexible, in the downward sense of course, to improve or restore competitiveness. You see that message in all processes, it's in the financial bail outs for the individual countries, Ireland, Greece, Portugal perhaps as well. It's in the Competitiveness Pact saying that wages should only reflect productivity and no longer inflation. It's in the European 2020 Strategy calling upon Spain for example to end wage indexation and upon many countries to go for company level bargaining, decentralised bargaining and it's also in this Economic Governance Package that is now on the table of European parliament were it's actually the intention of the Commission to impose fines on countries that refuse or fail

to follow up on European Recommendations to flexibilise wages, to flexibilise labour markets. So it's a quite shocking thing that's going on, that is happening in Europe.

Second question, is it possible to keep the Euro in tact and the latest question was what does all of this mean for European integration? Well I think the political commitments to the single currency that is in all European countries should not be underestimated and personally I think it's a non discussion to discuss about leaving the euro or the single currency or whatever. However what this also implies the following because if Europe is insisting on the principle of respecting the sanctity of debts to save the European banking system, if all of European policy makers and Governments are following that principle of saying we have to pay back the debt because otherwise we are bankrupting the European banking system. Well if Europe is following that principle then Europe should also be consistent and enable those countries with high debts to grow out of that. Enable them to give them the instruments and the measures and the policies that they can grow out of it and stay like that. What does this mean? Well it means many things but basically two important things. One is to go for European deficit issues, a common Eurobond so that individual countries are shielded from financial markets and from the high interests rates they have to pay and also so that the interest rates on debts for these countries can be reduced to rates as low as 3% or even lower. That would be a very good way to allow Greece, Ireland, other countries to grow out of debt. Another implication of this for European policy is that Europe needs to set up a European investment package that is specifically targeting those countries that are in trouble because this policy of asking austerity from Ireland, Portugal, Greece it's a dead end, if you do not offset this, if you do not compensate it by European investment programme, you will simply depress these economies for a long time, and debt will not be repaid. So Europe, when I said Europe, is part of the problem with this attack on wages but Europe is also part of the solution if we go for Eurobonds, European Investment Package.

The final question, what can trade unions do about this which was of course the most interesting question. Well I'll say shortly two things. One thing is please do not step into this trap of cutting wages to restore competitiveness. Make it a priority for each country, Ireland in particular, to defend your wage formation system, to defend your collective bargaining system, keep it from total deregulation. That should be a priority for you.

Secondly join ranks with other trade unions in Europe. This is a European-wide attack on wages, on collective bargaining so it needs to be answered by the European Trade Union Movement, by the ETUC. Now we've just confirmed at Congress in Athens and one of the Congress resolutions was to say the ETUC has to beef up, strengthen its activity on the coordination of collective bargaining. This is what we intend to do. In the coming months we will develop initiatives to do so and I call upon you, the Irish Congress to take part in those initiatives in a very good and solid way. At the very least what should be done by you, and this is key and essential is inform the ETUC of what is happening in your countries. If there is an attack on your wage bargain system, inform us so that we can in our turn raise help in Brussels and say to Ollie Rehn and Mr Barroso and Mr Trichet and others, that this can't forward but again for us, for the ETUC to do that, we need your information, we need your support. Thank you.

Sharon Burrows, General Secretary ITUC

Thank you Ronald and I think you understand from the appreciation that workers already angry, simply when they hear that saga of irresponsible workers generating a lack of competitiveness when we know, we know that whatever measure you take, whether its profits versus wages or productivity versus wages that workers have been taken home amongst the lowest share, the lowest share for decades in the years that led up to the crisis. So it's not the fault of workers, on the contrary if wages were higher, if there was a fair share that dividend Jack talks about was fair, then in fact they would have had greater domestic demand and at least gone part of the way to overcoming the imbalances you talked about between countries. So Ronald is right, it's not the fault of workers and wages are part of the solution, not in fact part of the problem. They're wages bargained collectively, with of course a robust floor of minimum wages and social protection.

So Nat, Dr Nat O'Connor what is the wisdom from those who understand the research as well or probably much better than we do?

Dr Nat O'Connor, Director TASC

First of all thank you very much for the invitation to speak to you today.

I have some thoughts on the Euro and the European Central Bank, in particular focus on that and perhaps also addressing the question of what Trade Unions can do. There's been some loose talk lately about Ireland leaving the Euro, either because we choose to do so or because Greece falls out of it and somehow Ireland is swept along. And I agree certainly with those who suggest that there were design flaws in how the Euro currency was set up. In particular monetary policy was too narrowly defined around control of inflation and there were inadequate mechanisms or you could say no mechanisms to deal with the crisis. For example there was no guaranteed lender of last resort for Euro Members States which is a massive flaw.

However weaknesses in the Euro monetary policy does not mean that any new punt would not also have weaknesses and dangers. And we also need to consider the profitability of what we're looking at with the Euro. Does Euro Monetary Policy need to be changed? Well it does of course and is France or Germany likely to leave the Euro, well probably not, as Roland said there's a strong political commitment to the Euro across Europe. So it's most likely that France and German and other states committed to the Euro will be changing the Euro Monetary Policy. The question is when and how far will they go? But we have a choice of being on the inside, when that change happens or indeed moving now to push and to shape that change, or else putting ourselves on the outside of the Euro, possibly forever.

Well I'd like to briefly consider three changes to Euro Policy that we could, and in my opinion should, push for at this point. And I say we, I think it would be in Ireland's interest but it's likewise something that the Trade Union Movement across Europe could be the agent of change for. So one, the European Central Bank of course must ensure more prudential banking and a stable banking system across Europe. Two the European Central Bank should seek to generate the conditions for full employment and three a clear change of direction of Euro Monetary Policy and economic policy should be communicated

now to the next Governor of the Central Bank, the European Central Bank before he takes up office.

Now I mentioned prudential banking, during the boom we had reckless banking in Ireland. Some commentators point out there were borrowers involved and took with reckless borrowing but they missed the point, they miss an important point. The focus shouldn't be on the lender/borrower relationship but on the relationship between banks and the people and the organisations from whom they got the money in the first place. When we talk about reckless banking, we're talking about a breakdown in the most basic relationship that anyone should have with an institution that there're giving their money to, whether it's their wages or their savings. You should ask what are you going to do with my money and how will I know my money is safe? That's the basic question in prudential banking. It accounts for depositors but also for insurance funds and pension funds who as we know were sucking into the Irish housing bubble and other parts of the financial crisis.

All of this is to say that there should be much more transparency and regulation about what is presented as a reasonable investment, safe as houses or a risky investment and of course we didn't have that oversight and regulation across banking and it's an important role for the European Central Bank. But you can argue there can be what might be called a Gresham's Dynamic, the bad business practice in banking drives good business practices out of the market. When you have banking dominated and financial services dominated by risky deals for bigger profits, well prudential banks lose out when it comes to investment. Money goes into the high profit risky banking and so there needs to be an institutional framework that regulates and prevents that kind of risky investment taking hold again and the European Institutions obviously would have a major role in that. So for example the European Central Bank could be given a role beyond price stability to look at financial stability. Looking at the changes and prices in markets and reacting faster such as when housing prices begin to spike.

Second thing, I mentioned full employment. You'd expect that in the free market USA the only job with a federal reserve would be to stop inflation so the savings of the middle classes are preserved from erosion. And in social Europe you might expect that Monetary Policy on inflation is balanced with the goals of controlling prices through interest rates and generating the conditions for full employment but in reality it's the other way around. To be specific under the Federal Reserve Act in the USA, Section 2A, it lists the Federal Reserve Monetary Policy objectives. To promote effectively, the goals of maximum employment, stable prices and moderate long-term interest rates and of course the Federal Reserve has been evolving in changing over one hundred and fifty years and the way the European Central Bank is only a decade old, it's still a new project. But we need to look at why the Federal Reserve has full employment as part of its mission and mandate, as well as prices alongside inflation and this would be a worthy cause for us to pursue. Obviously achieving full employment is challenging and all sorts of questions there but changing the stated ??? (Tape 8, 448) Policy objectives is a much easier short-term aim that would send out the message that Europe is once again focused on jobs and that the measure of a successful economy and a successful banking system is going to be the creation of jobs.

And I mentioned the next Governor of the European Central Bank. We've only had two Governors so far, Wim Duisenberg from 1998 to 2003 and then Jean-Claud Trichet who's

due to step down in October this year and Mario Draghi, the Governor of the Bank of Italy is designated to replace him. Now Trichet doggedly pursued inflation control but in fairness in part because that was his only job to do. Draghi will be in position for a non-renewable eight year term, until October 2019. So he's going to be in position for this period of transition. It therefore makes sense to send a clear message to Mr Draghi now that his tenor as Governor must coincide with the change in European Monetary Policy as part of an overall change in direction at European level. It's likely that France and Germany are going to make the move on Monetary Policy before 2019.

There are a lot of other things that you could look at, at a European level, Eurobonds and there's different ideas floating around about how they could work but the key thing that I want to emphasize is the need for change and direction. That the goals of the Eurocurrency, the European Central Bank should be informed by social Europe goals, such as full employment, which should define our economics at a European level which in turn defines so much of Ireland's future. Thank you.

Sharon Burrows, General Secretary ITUC

Thank you. Well Ronald, Bernadette do we think we can get the new Governor to listen to those messages? But certainly the full employment objective has lost vogue in the context of people who talk about now living with structural unemployment. Well we can't live with structural unemployment because that's about our people and decent work and a decent future so we absolutely agree with you on those points. Mícheál lets hear what you have to say about these questions. I know that in your role as an economist with Trinity College this is probably daily bread and butter and so we look forward to what your answers are to the big questions.

Mícheál Collins, Economist, Trinity College

Thank you Sharon. Yes it's daily bread and butter but you can only eat so much bread and butter we've been eating this day in day out as you're all aware for a long, long time. It's a pleasure to be asked to come in to speak to Congress and albeit a challenging topic in terms of where Europe is going. I was glad I didn't prepare this a couple of weeks ago when I was invited in the sense that it would be a very different answer now versus then because things keep changing.

You raised some interesting points at the outset and let me just pick and choose a few of them to make some comments on. Where are we in this crisis at the moment? I think we're still stuck in the middle of it, both in its duration and in a sense in its depth as well. I think there are three issues of uncertainty out there which are really problematic. Firstly really the need to find a solution to the situation that Greece finds itself in and a real solution to the Greek problem rather than some form of fudge. At a very basic level the amount of debt that Greece now finds itself carrying is unsustainable, it measures at around 160% of its GDP. You considered to be in trouble when you go past 100% of GDP. You should really be around 60% of your GDP. So at 160% of its GDP the Greek economy and the Greek people are burdened with a level of debt that really isn't sustainable for them to carry and therefore that needs to be addressed and that needs to be sorted out. And really the perspective in on Europe and looking at the Greek issue is well if you don't do something about that in a sense you're never tackling or sorting that problem out and it will persist in the long-term. So we do need to find some solution there, some fairly radical solution in terms of restructuring the Greek debt problem.

There's other uncertainties around the health of the European Banking System, we're about to get more stress tests on that. There's some worries associated with that too and I think there's also a third area of uncertainty around the lack of a credible European response to this problem and Europe does as a whole need to get its act together in terms of realising that it's a European response to a European problem that needs to occur.

So secondly if you think about Ireland and is there a way out from where Ireland finds itself? We're carrying a lot of debt as well, nowhere near as much as the Greeks but it's still an awful lot that we've taken on. Principally through a combination has been mentioned earlier of bad public policy decisions over the last decade and the reckless banking that Nat was talking about as well and the huge costs associated with that. It seems to me to be logical that if we are going to put some stability into Ireland and into the future of Ireland we've got to go and look at our debt and segment out, or differentiate between the burden that you and I have taken on to bail out the banking system, and that's about 70 Billion Euro when you add it all up. And differentiate between that and in a sense the other debt that we've carried because we made bad public policy decisions, because we borrowed money to build motorways and roads and all the other debt that we carry. The bottom line is and the simple reality is we're probably going to have to pay back all of that debt, whether we like it or not, but perhaps with the banking debt we should treat that as something we pay back over a far longer period of time. Some form, it's been mentioned in terms of some of the comments, some form of European Central Bank, perhaps European Central Bank funding for that which would allow us to say ok slowly but surely over the next forty five or fifty years we will pay down that debt and in a sense if we can do that, and get to that point and agree that, at a European level, well then the burden that you and I carry is still big, but it becomes considerably more manageable and that would be a significant shift for us to take and that's a European solution that would need to happen.

Okay where are we going with the Euro and Euro European integration I agree with the earlier comments that the Euro is likely to survive this. It's really very difficult actually to see how the Euro would break up. It's almost not in the interest of any of the member countries of the Euro to see it fall apart. It's certainly not in our interest, or even in the Greek's interest to get out of the Euro because your back to a fairly isolated currency that would drop in value very rapidly and that has huge implications if you were to go there. It's likewise not in the interest of Germany and France and others to walk away from the Euro, they've actually done really well out of the Euro. They've ended up with a currency that is somewhat weaker than what their currencies would have been and what that means is that their goods are cheaper to sell abroad and therefore they actually benefit from it. You'd be very foolish as a Politician to give that up. The cost of doing so would be enormous and I couldn't see them going there. But therefore if the Euro does survive, it does mean, or is going to survive it does mean we're to have to have more European integration in various forms. That means integration around physical policy in terms of greater monitoring of what countries did. If you stand back and look over the last couple of years Ireland was bizarrely the star student in Europe in terms of its performance and physical policy. We were ticking all the boxes and doing everything right so therefore it won't just be physical policy that we'll need to integrate a bit more closely in Europe, it'll be broader policy decisions as well. The banking system as Nat was talking about but

perhaps broadly some other policy issues around stability in the economy and so on as well so that a country like us can't suddenly overnight hit the trouble that we did.

Have I got some worries in terms of the future and where we're going? Well let me mention two in particular, in an Irish context at least. I do have some concern over what might be, what you might describe as overly zealous fiscal adjustments that might be pursued. You saw it yesterday where the Minister for Finance, instead of talking about an adjustment of 3.6 Billion, he suddenly talking about it at 4 Billion. We had this last year and it went from 3 to 6 Billion. We've got to be very careful about the sheer implication of taking that kind of money out of the economy and the deflationary impact that it has. In very simple terms, if we do and we are going to take about 3.6 Billion out of the economy next year, that means the economy has to grow by that much just to be stable and then if it's going to have any economic growth it's got to grow and replace that 3.6 Billion plus add more on top of it as well. For the Irish economy to grow by 2% next year the underlying growth has to be about 5%. It's got to replace what the Government takes out and its adjustment plus it's got to generate other economic growth. They are Celtic Tiger growth rates and we're not in the Celtic Tiger period and so the more we take out the more difficult the position becomes for us too.

I have a concern about us adapting perhaps excessive targets as well. We're aiming to get our debt down to 3% of GDP, that's the amount we'd be allowed to borrow every year. I worry about either the European Central Bank or indeed the new independent Fiscal Council which is about to be set up, coming along and saying not only should you do that but you should do more than that and you should start paying down your national debt very rapidly to get it down below a 120%. That means we have to take even more money out of the economy over the next decade and we've got to be very careful to adopt realistic rather than sort of ambitious paths, perhaps even macho fiscal targets over the next couple of years.

And let me finish then by the other question that was asked which was perhaps the one for yourselves, of what's the role for unions and workers in the trade union movement in all this? Well there are many but at least right up there at the front of it I think is a key role in offering some form of rational assessment of where Ireland is and what the way forward is for Ireland. In a sense that's been occurring up to now and I think it needs to develop. I made a few points here and they all seem to start with or which wasn't deliberate but anyway I think the opinions that should be offered, should be very realistic. There is a problem, we do need to find a solution. It's not about if there's a problem, it's about how we get there and there are tough elements associated with that but we need to be realistic on that as well. I think they need to be rounded as well reflecting the other views, which is that we should be conscious not just of the macro economic target but the fact that sitting behind all of this are people and families and wider society and that there are impacts there that we need to be aware of. It should be researched in terms of it being detailed. It should be relevant as well and it should take the long view. We are going to get through this and the issue is finding a realistic way for us to get out of it without and in a sense further and unnecessarily undermining where we're going.

Sharon Burrows, General Secretary ITUC

Thank you Mícheál. I think there's a general consensus that fiscal consolidation yes, but indeed leveraged off growth over a reasonable period of time with a view to how you

stabilise and grow economies where people sit at the heart of them and for us that means jobs and decent work. But there are some other measures as well, you talked about Greece and yes of course there are some fundamentals that just in the framework, I put to you need to be recognised and addressed. But you know the OECD's figures say that if everyone in Greece paid their taxes they should have \$30 Billion more in the bank on an annual basis. Now they wouldn't have quite a significant debt problem. In fact it would look quite reasonable by comparison. None of you mention the issue of taxation. What is the role of a serious debate on taxation, in all of our economies and throughout Europe?

Mícheál Collins, Economics, Trinity College

I spend my life running into trouble when I discuss taxation which is probably why I was hesitant. But certainly let's start with Greece because it's much safer. Yes you're absolutely right the Greeks do need to collect more of the legitimate tax revenue that the Government should be collecting there and there's a need for Greece to adjust that.

And let me come closer to home and I hope the guy with the eggs that David has mentioned has left the room, but there is more tax to be collected in Ireland as well. If you stand back and look at it, there's less tax collected in Ireland than there really should be. Now the great problem is that, true, in a sense perhaps excessive tax cutting in this country over a number of years, it's very hard to reverse that out, and to either ask people to pay more taxes which I think across the population as a whole is likely we will all be paying more, but then there are clearly, and it's a point that I've pursued over time, there are clearly enormous numbers of tax breaks, which people have been able to exploit and you've got to be on a very good income to be able to consider whether you will or won't invest in a multi-storey carpark or whatever else the case is. It's not the kind of question that most of us have to think about because you're in hundreds of thousands, if not millions. But those tax breaks that have been there do allow other sections of society not to pay their fair share either. And we do run a very low Corporate Tax rate in this country. It seems to be one of our corner stones of policy. If it is, we need to realise there's a cost, which is if your not going to collect the tax there, you've got to collect it somewhere else or you do less in terms of public services. I don't think we want to do less in terms of public services so in a sense we've got to collect the tax there.

Sharon Burrows, General Secretary ITUC

But taxation should be part of policy?

Mícheál Collins, Economist, Trinity College

It's an unpopular subject, but it's part of it.

Sharon Burrows, General Secretary ITUC

Of course, but none of this is something we are in favour of tackling so let's put it all on the table.

Mícheál Collins, Economist, Trinity College

That's true.

Sharon Burrows, General Secretary ITUC

Nat, Ronald actually raised the question and you've all addressed in some form or other the fact that the European Union is not actually doing enough to promote growth and stability, whether it's in the financial sector, whether it's in growth, whether it's in terms of that new development model. Ronald suggested European Investment Programme. It certainly worked for the Tiger. I remember being here in the mid to late 90's. I can't remember the date. You all know how old I am now. But in fact there I think the development dollar was something like 9:1 in that initial European Union period and it made a big difference, targeting industry sectors, it might have had some down sides in the long run but it certainly made a difference to injecting growth in this economy. What do you think the role of a European investment programme is? Is there a role for one and what should it do?

Nat O'Connor, Director TASC

Okay, so I suppose there are a lot of factors coming together there. If we regulate the banks and we regulate the kind of reckless banking, things like the tax breaks that Micheál talked about like the Section 23s, what's happening at the moment in the European banking system is that if one country allows reckless banking there's a flow of capital, as of course there is the free movement of capital in Europe to that system, to make the quick money, to take the profit to get the money out again. And of course Ireland was a beacon for money in from across European banks. So we have to level of a minimum amount of bank regulation across Europe so that money doesn't flow into making quick bucks but flows into more productive investment and it's in that context that certainly there's a need for, that's one part of the investment story that's getting private capital into productive investment.

On the European side there are a number of different versions of Eurobonds putting out bonds by a European level in order to raise money anew and there's one suggestion that came out of the Financial Times on the 4th July from Stuart Holland and a number of others, former Prime Minister of Italy, former Prime Minister of Belgium floating the idea of a Eurobond where the money is coming directly into the union itself which of course doesn't have a huge amount of debt, has a capacity to take on debt and there's more detail needs to be looked at there but there are existing mechanisms. Part of the hesitation with some Eurobond ideas is that you'd need new institutions, you'd need Treaty changes but it may well be the case that you can look at things such as the existing European Investment Fund, the EIF which is an institution and use that as a vehicle for issuing union bonds, getting money and then of course investing that money in productive activity across Europe.

Sharon Burrows, General Secretary ITUC

Well there's certainly a role for policy deliberation around investment and the role of the European Union in aggregate.

Maria-Helena let me ask you something that astonishes me and you've been in the hot seat, thankfully you did negotiate with the unions just before the Troika moved in with its conditionality but explain to me why it is that if we genuinely live in the free market we get lectured about, that we've not seen Governments take responsibility for asserting that the bond markets should take a share and therefore a share of the fallout of the crisis. Why is it that somehow this sector, and particularly those demanding now I think threading

bonds which used to be fantastically safe investments now as basically almost tradable derivatives particularly in terms of interest rates swaps. Why shouldn't they take a share of the downside of a so-called free market?

Maria Helena André

I think they should but it's hard to calculate how you should do that today and I think there is a lot of fear and a lot of concern around in all the markets and so that probably one of the reasons why it is difficult to move forward in that direction. Again I think that when we address the initial Fiscal Policy or when we address the issue of Eurobonds this is not the type of areas that should be dealt with exclusively at a national level and I think one of the main problems we are facing in Europe today is the fact that we have no fiscal coordination across the European Unions. It's not fiscal harmonisation, it's fiscal coordination that we would need to move towards, and I think we've been very timid and very hesitant in that respect and I was quite surprised, I need to say, after having been so many years around in Europe discussing coordination and finding that the word harmonisation was a sort of a dirty word in European slang to see countries like France and Germany for instance moving towards the idea that we need to have a bigger economic coordination i.e. via harmonising retirement age, via harmonising wage formation in European unions and other areas. I think we have to be very suspicious about this mixture which all of a sudden we see between the need for bigger a coordination, yes and I think that those who are on the progressive side at European Union level have always called for a much bigger economic coordination than the one we've had in the context of Economic and Monetary Union and all of a sudden this idea that you need to harmonise German-style and I think that this is something we need to look at and be careful about in the development of the European Union.

Sharon Burrows, General Secretary ITUC

Well I don't think anyone in this room would disagree with that and I know that Bernadette Ségol in a few minutes will actually probably address the economic governance question, certainly the dangers of the sanctions issued for working people's rights, their wage setting, those issues are something that I think is going to end up in a labour war unless Social Europe reasserts itself but we might leave that for the minute to Bernadette but your absolutely right.

I want to ask you Ronald though, in terms of the issues that were being discussed when the Leader of the Labour Party, the Deputy Prime Minister was here. You said you think and I garner a sense of consensus around this from the panel that the risk of the Euro is a non discussion basically. That the Euro zone for all of the reasons around that integration that we've talked about will continue but what about restructuring the debt? What are the chances of actually exerting enough pressure on the Government, on the Troika to actually restructure the debt to make sure that the time we talked about Fiscal consolidation? The conditions that allow growth are there and I might add that Mícheál raised the growth question. Last time I looked it was tracking on IMF projections at 4.4 globally for next year and about 2.3 in the developed world. So that's not going to meet your debt levels let alone your stability targets of some 5%, your absolutely right about that. So is it possible and what are the mechanisms for pressure? What can we do to assert pressure to help on the question of that restructuring, at least around the timing and the conditionality?

Ronald Janssen, EUTC

Well it's a difficult discussion and the reason for that is that there's one major player in Europe who does not want to enter this discussion and that's the European Central Bank. So if you restructure your debts, if you default on part of your debts well then your not going to have access to financial markets for the next five or ten years. So you need extra money to refinance your own banking system because they are also holding part of your sovereign debt. So to refinance your own bank system you need access to money through the European Central Bank and here the ECB is clearly saying we do not want to hear any discussion on the restructuring debt so it's a big non-discussion or discussion that is blocked the ECB. What is going on now is in practise is that Member States, particularly Germany is however looking for some kind of debt restructuring but then your getting into language like voluntary debt roll-over or voluntary restructuring with the consent of the banks involved. I would warn everyone of this because if you look at the details of this, this is another present to the banking sector in which Governments are saying well ok if Deutsche Bank or any other bank agrees to roll over the debt in return it gets a 30 years advance with an interest rate as high as 8%. They refinance their bonds with the ECB with the interest rate of 1 or 2% and they are getting guarantees from the Greek Government or whatever, so you are actually moving into a situation in which you are giving the banks even more presents and in which Greece or other countries are saddled up with even more debt.

Sharon Burrows, General Secretary ITUC

So that's the down side of that formula but what about Mícheál's suggestion that somehow the European Union has to take responsibility for the framing of a debt repayment provision over time. So forty to fifty years that's a reasonable timeframe for infrastructure build in major projects. Is that the answer Ronald?

Ronald Janssen, EUTC

Yes but then you're into another discussion and this is also one of the ideas that are circulating inside the ETUC, and our resolutions at our Congress where we are calling for a European Public Bank for sovereign debt which would play the function of the lender of last resort which is now gone for the single currency area and which would also play the role of shielding vulnerable Member States of the Euro area of this financial market circulation, and if needs be indeed continue to hold that debt until the country is back on its feet.

Sharon Burrows, General Secretary ITUC

Well challenges of course, how do you do that and act in solidarity? I think we all should be very angry about the lack of solidarity in assisting in a financial crisis. When I read in your newspapers this morning what's it going to cost Mícheál? Billions of dollars I think? \$9 billion, only \$9 billion in repayments. There's a lot of social protection, a lot of jobs, a lot of schools, a lot of hospitals in \$9 billion. So you know there's a lot of debates here for policy directions that the trade unions will play a rightful role in. I've got just a few minutes left I can probable take three or four contributions if they are held to about a minute and a genuine question from the audience. So Delegates only please. So I'm going to start with this delegate in the second row. There's a roving mike somewhere and I'm warning you that I have to wind up in literally eight minutes. The guy in the blue shirt here, one behind him alright we'll get to you I promise. Who has the mike? Speak up.

Delegate

Hello a quick question. Standard and Poors, a private company can decide what the interest rate is across Europe. Is that not bad for the European Union? That a particular company, a company can decide what interest rate, we the people of Europe, should have to pay if we are in debt? If you think it's a bad thing, what should be done about it and how soon can something be done about it, and by whom?

Sharon Burrows, General Secretary ITUC

Ok thank you. The panellists are taking notes and I don't think anybody thinks the rating agents should have the power they have and if they and in fact the G20 promised they wouldn't have, just two and half years ago that there're back in business in a big way. Over here.

Sean O'Neill ASTI

Is the problem with Europe not really a democratic deficit? That an awful lot of the people who are making decisions are not democratically accountable, therefore they don't feel that they actually are in anyway able to relate to the people themselves. For example you were talking about the credit rating agency, we don't know who they are. We've got a President of Europe we didn't elect, Mr Baroso. Legislation where parts comes from the European Parliament but the rest it comes from other areas within Europe which are not democratically accountable and the best of example of course was here in Ireland where we had the Lisbon Treaty which we voted on twice and ended up a second time where we had a number of academics telling us well why the people actually voted against it, but there was no actual meaningful interaction with the people, in actually trying to discuss the merits or otherwise of the Lisbon Treaty. I do feel that the lack of control over interest rates was another example of that which is part of the European project but if the decision making process in Europe is not accountable directly to the people surely what you're going to do is you will continue to alienate people from the whole central ideal of Europe and that is a danger which seems to be happening.

Sharon Burrows, General Secretary ITUC

Ok is there democratic deficit in regard to those who are taking the decision. Very good question. Yes I will go to the sister. No. I think we should equality in the room and there's a sister here with a black dress on at the end of the row who for the ... no? okay.

Tom Geraghty, PSEU

Some text missing at start of tape.....particularly for those who travelled. I think it's very important that we do this because far too often the only time we have any discussion in this country about Ireland's relationship with Europe it's in the context of a referendum campaign and to be honest to describe what happens as a debate would be a misnomer, white noise might be a more appropriate characterisation. I was particularly glad to hear the panels being so emphatic in rejecting the idea of Ireland leaving the Euro as believe it or not that has been floated as a serious proposition and it always seemed to me to be absolutely absurd that in the middle of a economic banking and Fiscal crisis somebody would seriously suggest that we would go off and try to set up our own currency which would obviously just dive in value very very quickly and interest rates would go up. But the alternative, it seems to me and Mícheál mentioned about greater fiscal monitoring within the Euro zone, if the Euro zone is to survive and thrive.

But my question really is that surely it goes well beyond monitoring and surely there has to be a degree of direction and control from the centre and perhaps I'd offer the observation which may perhaps suggest what I think the answer ought to be which is that one of the failings of the Euro thus far has been the absence of such central control but I do think we need to be honest and it would be useful if you spelled out what that would mean to Ireland.

Sharon Burrows, General Secretary ITUC

Thank you and I can only take one more. Is there a hand from a woman in the room? No? Yes!

Lorraine Mulligan, SIPTU

Thank you, Lorraine Mulligan from SIPTU. Just a question as to why it is that the European Union is viewed in such negative terms in Ireland in the current context when the reality is that we don't have very much debate at home here in Ireland and what role can the new Government play in trying to put in place structures so that we can have more debate on what is happening at European level as citizens? Thank you.

Sharon Burrows, General Secretary ITUC

Okay we're going to try these very quickly, 30 seconds Nat. Why is EU viewed as negative in terms of Ireland?

Dr Nat O'Connor, Director TASC

Well I think a certain extent of it is politics involved in that, that's it's convenience whenever a directive comes along that our Ministers agreed at Brussels level, it's convenient they say oh here's comes a directive from Europe that we have to implement when it's something unpopular. So there's a short term political gains being made by pretending Europe is some other thing that we have to deal with. I think we have to be much more open and transparent about the deals we do with Europe, the horse-trading that goes on, what we win and what we lose and we have to be just more open about the fact that we don't always win but we're in there in a partnership and we have to be clear about that.

Sharon Burrows, General Secretary ITUC

Thank you. Mícheál the question of Standards and Poors, should the ratings agencies be able to set interest rates effectively?

Mícheál Collins, Economist, Trinity College

As a group the rating agencies have gone through an intriguing transformation over the last couple of years where they got everything totally wrong and it's their job to advise on things and then they sort of try to delete all of that and then decided that they'll dress themselves up as the new people with all the insights. It's hard to believe all of that when you look at the ratings agency. I don't think many people have a lot of respect for them. I'm struggling to make one point in their favour, let me try it, which is to say at least they're doing, say yesterday if I'm right they downgraded the Portuguese debt I think to junk status. Why did they do that? Well they did that because they said we don't know what's going on here. It's clear that Europe hasn't made up its mind what's going on here and they're right on that actually and in fairness that's not a bad signal and it is derived

from those uncertainties I mentioned earlier. We really need to get our act together but without any doubt the ratings agencies overplay their hand and it's something we do need to reel in. Perhaps the way to do that is that this in a European context is with a far more powerful European central banking system along the lines of the Eurobonds and so on that we were talking about which in a sense would be stable full stop and that would really remove the relevance of those ratings.

Sharon Burrows, General Secretary ITUC

I think if it was just advice we'd all be comfortable, the problem is it's becoming controlled as you imply and well regulation will fix it in part, I would simply love to see somebody, Central Banker would be happy for maybe ten of them, a few Prime Ministers along the way to stand up and take them on because they are the bullies now who are creating with their bond market cousins a run on sovereign debt which in fact part of that democratic deficit.

Ronald let me ask you, monitoring or central control?

Ronald Janssen, ETUC

Well I was expecting that question. Let me say that there's an important implication if you are a member of a single currency. In a single currency you have to follow common rules. Single currency means one single interest rate and one single monetary policy so you can't have a situation in which different countries are going different ways, which is actually what happened in the past and is why we are in such a mess. So a single currency needs economic governors and this is also something that the ETUC has been saying from the beginning, twenty years ago. So we need economic Governors and this is more than simply monitoring, this is really giving direction and making sure that member states follow that direction, however let me also say that the economic Governments project which is now on the table is completely rejected by us, by the ETUC because these are rules that are simply flexidising markets, it's simply a project to build a new liberal Europe. So our position is economic Governments, more than monitoring, giving direction and forcing countries in that direction, however no liberal project but the project that bounces the economic dimension with the social dimension and also a project in which social dialogue also at European level plays a role because lets not have any illusion that when you give economic Governments in the hands of commissioners or you can simply call them bureaucrats, lets not have any illusion that they will not make mistakes and they will be caught up in their own text books, in their own political mantras of the moment so to correct context to have a real economic government that works, that recognises the problems of reality, you need trade unions and employers organisations to say to these politicians or non collective commissioners, 'hey you're living in the past this is not what is happening'.

Sharon Burrows, General Secretary ITUC

So Maria-Helena it comes back to you. Is there a democratic deficit? Is Social Europe at risk? What is it that we should be advocating to make sure that while we get the economic policy settings right, that Social Europe, that sharing and prosperity, the solidarity that was about collective growth and development, what is it we should be doing? Where's the deficit and what should we be doing to fill the gap?

Maria Helena André

I think that you can always improve and you should always try to seek to improve the democratic functioning of our institutions in our countries and I think there's a lot of room for manoeuvring in that respect. I think that if we talk at European Union level and if you look at the progress that we have seen in the European Unions in the social field what I feel, what I observe is that the social policy has always been the weak pillar of European integration process and we've never been able to put on the same footing the economic and the social pillar and now we've added the environmental pillar within a sustainable development strategy which is the right way to move forward. But we've never been able to coordinate better our social policies, our social objectives, and I think that that's probably the biggest challenge we have ahead of us. But while politicians at national level still say that the good things we have achieved in Brussels are the result of our good work as Government, the bad things are to be blamed to Brussels. We will have huge difficulties in showing to ordinary working class people that Europe is worth the effort and that Europe is part of the solution and that we will not be able today, in the global world to strive for democracy, for progress, and for our social justice if we just do it each country by itself. And I think that that is exactly the thing we need to decide very quickly than trying to dilute this discussion and it's a question of choice regarding what is the new social policy that we need to have to knowing that through all this change, knowing that the balance between the countries and the regions have changed, knowing that the weight of Europe in the world economy is decreasing and knowing that we are moving backwards in some areas and that we cannot consider in an arrogant way that we are the best in the world and that nothing will happen to us.

Sharon Burrows, General Secretary ITUC

Well I must say as an outsider living now in Belgium, working for you it does seem to me a shocking thing that the Washington Consensus is somehow expanded across the Atlantic and now resides equally in Brussels. We do have to have a Social Europe if the world's workers are to have the ambition and even a chance of realising the ambitions for social justice that we all share. So yes much of the problem lies at the heart of Governments in Europe, but much of the solution does too, if it puts working people, their families, the real reasons for economies, and that's people and living standards at the heart.

And can I leave you with a challenge around solidarity? I was incredibly shocked to see how fast the discourses come from the US where of course your seeing public servants under attack, in eighteen States in terms of their fundamental collective bargaining rights but worst than that when I did that dreadful programme Hard Talk on the BBC where they kind of yell at you for twenty-five minutes and you're relieved when it stops. What was most shocking to me was that discourse is now right throughout the UK which is in fact that somehow it isn't just greedy workers rolling into the other problem, it's public sector workers who are very wealthy, have gold-plated pensions and somehow private sector workers ought to be really angry about this. That breakdown in solidarity, the myths and lies around those questions, that's not by accident and it goes right across all of this debate whether it's the economic, the social, the rights-based or indeed as Maria pointed out, our ambitions around environmental sustainability and green jobs, our solidarity, across workers, across workplaces, that's what will give us the strength to actually formulate the policy, formulate the advocacy and stand up against the outrageous proposals as they come from people who in that democratic deficit described by a delegate, have no responsibilities, share none of our values and are not interested in

the people that we serve. So all strength to your arm, bonne courage, you are indeed , as always a fighting union movement. I'm proud to be your General Secretary at the International level and thank you to these amazing panellists, Maria-Helena, Ronald, Nat and Mícheál. Thank you - their insights I think, I've enjoyed it, I know you've enjoyed it. The challenge is ours collectively and I know that collective strength will win out every time. Solidarity.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Sharon and thanks to our distinguished panellists. We very much appreciate there having taking the time to assist us in our deliberations on mapping a way ahead, an alternative to the way that the establishment is imposing and I want just as well to take the opportunity to thank in particular Sharon Burrow. I've been attending Congress for thirty one years and I cannot recall any officer at the level of Sharon Burrow of the International Confederations addressing us and I think that if the presence today of the General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation which is about as high as it goes in the Trade Union Movement in terms of global competence. Being here with us and taking the time to be here with us is something that we should very much appreciate. I had the pleasure of meeting Sharon Burrow just a few short years ago but I had heard of her and her work for very many years earlier, originally in the Australian Trade Union Movement and then later and it's a great privilege Sharon to have you here and your setting a record here because I think it's the first time in very many years of anyone at your level in the International Trade Union Movement has participated in our deliberations and thank you very much for the time you afforded it.

I want now to invite another very distinguished female trade unionist who was once the Assistant General Secretary of the International Textile Workers Federation between 1974 and 1985, who has been a member of the ETUC, The European Trade Union Congress Executive Committee and Steering Committee from 1985 to 2011, who was also a Director of Euro Fiat which is responsible for Commerce, Finance, IT and other services between 1985 and 2000, who was elected leader of Uni Europa in 2000 and held that position to 2010, being re-elected in 2003 and 2007 and who earlier this year, in May was elected General Secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation at the Athens Congress. Bernadette Ségol holds a Masters Degree in Philosophy from the University of Toulouse and it's a great pleasure to welcome her here this afternoon to address us on behalf of our European State.

Bernadette Ségol, General Secretary, ETUC

President, General Secretary, dear friends, Brothers and Sisters, Trade Unionists I thank you most warmly to give me the opportunity to address Congress today as the newly elected General Secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation taking over from John Monks and also the first woman in that position.

I would like to thank you, to thank the ICTU for supporting my candidature during the last Congress in Athens. You will now have to adjust from John Monks, Manchester sounding English to definitely French/English tone but I can get it that you can understand what I'm saying which is ideally the main thing. And whatever my accent, what I would like to be carrying to you today is a very, very warm message of solidarity and friendship from all fellow men and women workers across Europe.

Times are harsh for Irish workers and Irish people and when times are harsh and rough it's good to have friends around. If you were to remember only one message from my intervention I would like it to be that the ITUC stands with you, with Irish workers and Irish people with the Irish Congress of Trade Union. Together we have fought and we will fight the wrong headed measures that won't manage to get Ireland and Europe out of the mess. Together we will fight for the right measures to open the future. We all know what went wrong for Ireland and for Irish workers. Bank and bankers played a casino game, but one with no risk to themselves. They used cheap money at their disposal, created housing and a credit bubble and when the bubble burst they turned to the Government for a rescue plan and the Government turned to the EU for support. The rescue plan was adopted on condition that Irish workers would accept incredibly tough austerity measures and on condition that Irish workers and people would pay for the speculators. This is, in a few words, the story and now you live with the consequences. You bear the burden of a plan bringing depression and deflation, not the growth necessary to revive the economy and employment. You are bearing the burden which is heavily unfair on the population and incapable of offering a long term solution. President and friends this must change, this must change. The austerity measures will not get us through, we know it and I have to tell you that off and on when I am in corridor discussion face to face with some of the EU leaders or Civil Servants, they admit that the cuts are not going to work. But despite my encouragement they are not doing their own coming out on this matter and I hope they will in the near future because what we, the ETUC, what we are asking for, for Ireland but are we are asking it for Portugal and Greece, where the situation is even more complex and dangerous. So what we are asking for is a sustainable solution and these sustainable solutions lies with a long-term solidarity package.

Now friends, solidarity is a very dear word to us in trade unions, it's a very important word and we are asking for a solidarity package because that would give a concrete meaning to that word solidarity. A solidarity package would mean first the existence of Eurobonds which would pull part of the debt and give countries in difficulty access to credit at a reasonable rate. These would be a concrete solidarity move because this move would say 'let us share the burden' and the ETUC from the very beginning with John Monks in the driving seat has been calling for such a pooling of the debts. The ETUC Congress confirm these demands. Friends this solidarity solution is a demand from all ETUC members. It is supported by trade unions and trade unionists, like the German DGB the German Confederation of Trade Union the DGB, or the TUC against the view of their own Government that currently opposed the idea for their own selfish reasons.

The solidarity package should as well include measures against tax speculation. We want a Financial Transaction Tax, we demand Financial Transaction Tax that would contribute to investment and job creation. We indeed welcomed a few days ago the first step in that direction initiated by the European Commission. Now this first step is just the first step in a speech but we are going to follow that up.

A solidarity package should also use an increased use of EU structural funds for employment creating projects as well as project bonds. In Ireland unemployment is now over 14% and long-term unemployed we present 40% of those unemployed. In Greece and in Spain over 40% of young people are without a job so it's not surprising that they are in the street. All these people need support to go back to work and contribute to the right revival of the economy.

Friends this is not a pie in the sky. This is not wishful thinking. All this is possible. Don't listen to people who tell you this is not possible. Of course it is possible. It is a question of political will and leadership and we haven't seen much of either around the table in Brussels recently.

I am well aware that the burden that you are carrying is next to unbearable and that voices are heard that say Ireland should stop paying the bill and let the creditors deal with their own loss. I think this reaction is fully understandable, however, before walking down this path it would be wise and necessary to carefully crosscheck what would be the consequence of a default on men and women we are representing. Default could lead to a collapse of the economic system, add to unemployment, poverty and despair and remember it is not possible to default in Ireland as it was in Argentina or in Iceland because Ireland is in a monetary union and depends on it. President, we are in the midst of a risky and historic period. The temptation does exist everywhere to jeopardise the European Union and return to National State. But narrow nationalism is not the way. We, all the unions in the ETUC, we say no to the populists, to the racists and to all the nationalists around who unfortunately are on the rise in many, many countries. Friends we stand with those who want to offer a future to our children and we want to give them a view. We want to give them a future with a view and in a globalised world the European Union has that potential but not the National State. The Irish economy is expert and service-oriented and greatly involved in trade exchanges with other EU countries. It is benefiting from European integration. So our solution is a qualitative step towards an economically and socially sustainable European Union.

We talked a lot in the panel about economic governance of Europe and this economic governance package is now decided upon by EU Institutions, by the Parliament, by the Council and by the Commission. And for the ETUC economic governance is indeed necessary. Sound public accounts have to be restored and there should be rules for the game in a single monetary zone. We are currently struggling to put this economic governance package on a fairer track, a track that should not lead to downward competition on wages and dismantling of our social model. Our social model is made of industrial relations, free collective bargaining, social dialogue, well-functioning public services, and social protection systems. And faced with common economic and monetary rules, faced with attempts to play workers, and particularly workers' wages, against each other, trade unions in Europe, must, I'm saying must coordinate and act together. And this is what the European Trade Union Confederation is for, more today than ever before. We need European Trade Unionism, working hand in hand with national trade unions for the benefit of the workers that we represent. And President, friends this is exactly what I shall be working for with you in the coming years. Brothers and Sisters, the Irish Congress of Trade Union is a strong and lively organisation. With your determination, with your stamina, courage, with your sense of dialogue and from what I can gather as well, with your solid sense of humour, you will get through I am sure. You will get through. I thank you very sincerely for being such a positive and encouraging member of the European Trade Union Confederation. Be assured that the EUTC will continue to give you a strong voice where and when necessary. Have a good and forward-looking Congress, don't go harsh and thank you for your attention.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Bernadette and incidentally this woman is clinically precise as she sounds and we thank you for addressing us today, Bernadette and we want to ask you if you would convey our good wishes to the Executive Committee and the members of the ETUC so thank you very much Bernadette and every good wisheon your appointment as General Secretary.

I now want to call on Billy Hannigan, Chairman of the Scrutineers to give us some election results, so Billy.

Billy Hannigan, PSEU

Thank you President, Billy Hannigan, PSEU. I understand there was a request made here yesterday to replace the Executive Council and it's now being implemented.

The outcome of the Election of the person to the Congress Executive Council in respect to the Trades Council seat, the outcome there was 1,000 votes Cronin, 342,000 votes Fleming and 195,000 votes for Gallagher, so Fleming is elected.

In respect of the Executive Council Election the total poll is 522,000. We're assigning a value of a thousand to each vote to facilitate transfers, giving a quota of 16,840 and what I'm going to do is give you the first count for each of the candidates and in respect of those candidates who were eliminated to indicate whether or not they were eliminated. So if it's not indicated that a person was eliminated you can take it that they were elected. Broderick, Larry 18,000 votes

Callinan, Kevin 17,000 votes

Campfield Brian 18,000 votes

Cody, Shay 18,000 votes

Coy, Eamon 10,000 votes

Cullen, Walter 19,000 votes

Devoy, Eamon 18,000 votes

Dooley, Pamela 18,000 votes

Dooley, Seamus 18,000 votes

Doran, Liam, 18,000 votes

Dwyer, Theresa 2,000 (eliminated)

Fitzpatrick, Steve 18,000 votes

Geraghty, Tom 20,000 votes

Hall, Arthur 19,000 votes

Hall Callaghan, 18,000 votes

Housten, Lawrence 15,000 votes (elected without reaching the quota)

Jennings, Mike 13,000 votes (elected without reaching the quota)

Kelly, Jimmy 19,000 votes

King, Pat 17,000 votes

MacMenamin, Peter 18,000 votes

McKeown, Patricia 19,000 votes

Moore, Jim 12,000 votes

Morgan, Maria 17,000 votes

Ni Sheaghdh, Phil Phil 20,000 votes

Noonan, Sheila 16,000 votes (elected without reaching the quota)

O'Connor, Jack 20,000 votes

O'Donnell, Louise 17,000 votes
Ronayne, Eoin 18,000 votes
Scheffer, Carol 13,000 votes (elected by the requirement to fulfil a gender quota)
Sherlock, Marie 18,000 votes
Thomas, Dave 7,000 votes
Ward, Noel 14,000 votes

Could I thank my fellow Scrutineers and the Congress staff for their assistance. Sorry if I didn't make it clear Moore, Jim 12,000 votes was eliminated. Apologies if I didn't make that clear.

Can I thank my fellow Scrutineers, the Congress Head Office staff and perhaps in future we can use new technology to convey the results direct to your blackberry bushes. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thanks to the Scrutineers and to the Congress staff who worked with the Scrutineers. And now I want to move to Motions 33, 34, 35, 36 and 37 and I want to ask the movers to be ready to move and I want to invite Sheila Nunan to move Motion 33 on behalf of the Executive Council. Thank you.

Sheila Nunan, Executive Council

Thank you President and I will intend to do this very speedily, not out of any disrespect to excellent here this morning, both Michael and Margaret who very eloquently set out the case that's in this Motion. So I will dispense of the preamble and just focus very clearly on the specifics that we are asked to do in relation to this Motion. And the first is to acknowledge and promote the status of retired workers within the structures of the affiliate organisation and specifically what the Motion is requesting of us that where structures should not exist in our organisations to establish such structures. Just to say that our experience in our own organisation has benefited hugely from such a structure from our retired teachers association and this year we were very pleased to be the position to give them some office space. I think we would all agree very fitting that our retired members who have contributed so much to the improvement of working conditions of current workers should in turn expect support from those that come behind them. That's the intergenerational solidarity that we speak about but the urgent demand for such support is set out further in the two other aspect of the Motion.

The first is income adequacy which of course is at the heart of quality of life of our retired colleagues and their income deriving from two main sources, social transfers and for those fortunate enough to have an occupational pension. Both of these are under threat, the latter in crisis and consequently a huge level of dependence on the former to reduce the risk of poverties. And while the employers are advocating the responsibility for pension, the state becomes the main source of support, the focus now must be on the level of state pension and our retired colleagues need to avoid the pension poverty trap. Older people more than ever need to be more than just above the poverty trap and the state pension must be linked to the average wage and funded through progressive taxation. Specifically I want to draw attention to the abolition of the State Pension Transition in 2014 as an example of how that poverty trap may operate for workers who have signed their contract up to 65. There at the gaps between retirement and pension ages is

certainly widening. The treatment of low income pensions at the last budget equally has had a significant impact on income adequacy, particularly in the treatment of people on very low income in their retirement of less than 12 thousand who are required to pay universal social charge. A subset of the income inadequacy is of course fuel poverty and I think it is shameful colleagues that Ireland has an in excess of winter debt rate between fifteen hundred and two thousand people each year, many of whom older people who die mainly of cold related illness because they simply cannot afford heat in their homes. Recently harsh winters may well be a pattern of things to come and we must treat this of a matter of urgency. There are practical initiatives such as insulation that could be very helpful in this regard as well as creating employment, two objectives that could be met.

And then finally colleagues in terms of health care, clearly the recent spotlight on standards in nursing home has caused a great deal of unease and anxiety amongst our older and retired colleagues and their families. Homecare clearly remains a very very desirable option for people who experiencing health difficulties and all health professionals I think would agree that the most effective, direct support is that given in homecare services, targeted, very direct and a model that allows dignity of the recipient to remain in the security of their home environment. Our retired colleagues have proven themselves to be superb advocates in their time as workers. It is now our responsibility colleagues to ensure to support them in their years and hope that they can have the income adequacy to give them dignity in that life. I ask you for your support.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Sheila. Secunder?

Maria Morgan, Executive Council

Maria Morgan on behalf of the Executive.

President I was to second but I'm not going to rail road the points and take up the time because there are speakers. But just to point that I would want to make is in terms of the importance of the issue and the importance of the welfare of farms, which essentially when we hear from Governments about reforms essentially what that means is cuts and dressed up as reforms and just these issues need to be a huge part of our campaign and in the North we have just come through a public consultation on state pensions and the plan is to reduce the pension to a flat rate of a hundred and forty pounds which is very worrying when the poverty line rate is one hundred and seventy eight pound so I second this.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Maria. Sorry delegate just given that we have four motions on education pending and this motion deals with the standard of living of pensioners, are there any speakers who wish to speak on this?

Hugh Rafferty, UNITE

Chairman, Delegates my name is Hugh Rafferty. I'm a UNITE retired member from Belfast. I would like to highlight the value of retired members with their experience, commitment and dedication in both parts of the country. I wish to speak to you on a very important aspect of the Motion, namely pensions. Everybody in this room will retire, some sooner than others. What are your chances of having a reasonable standard of living in

your retirement? If the pension trends continue the prospects are going to be very pure indeed, they will be very slim indeed because the final year salaries are being phased out, they are being watered down. The conditions are not the same, also too the State or anyone else's pension scheme no longer exists. So what will we have to supplement our State pension? Only money conscious schemes. These are linked to the stock market so you don't need to be a mathematician to know that the benefits from stock market are very very limited indeed, in fact they are nearly practically nonexistent.

At the present State Pension in Northern Ireland, the pension for a single person is £102.15. It can be increased to a maximum of £237.15 though Pension Credits but this is means tested. The Governments poverty level is £178. Anybody below that level is in poverty. 756 died in Northern Ireland last year. Sixty percent of those people died because they had to make a choice, either to eat or heat and when they had to do both they either died of malnutrition or hypothermia. This is the 21st Century, would you like to look forward to that situation? This is why we are fighting for a decent State Pension, equivalent to the poverty level of £178. How can this be achieved in the economic situation?

Jack O'Connor, President

Sorry Delegate that red light is on there, I'll have to ask you to conclude.

Hugh Rafferty, UNITE

... well it can be achieved because of the tax system being changed to suit it and also too by using the national insurance surplus which at the moment is £41 billion pounds, not million pounds, billion pounds. This is money that we have paid for ...

Jack O'Connor, President

I'll have to ask to you conclude. Thank you very much Delegate. Now I want to put Motion 33 to the vote. All in favour please show? All against? Abstentions. The Motion is carried and now I want to invite the INTO to move Motion 34.

Noirin Flynn, INTO

Presidents, colleagues, end of tape some text missing ... Celtic Tiger years Ireland prided itself on its young, highly educated population. Over the past eighteen months twelve hundred teaching posts have been removed from the education system, seven hundred at primary level and five hundred at post primary. The reduction of seven hundred primary teachers at primary level comes at a time when the Department of Education and Skills statistics show that enrolments into primary schools will increase by thirty thousand, eight hundred and forty eight pupils by 2014. In this context primary education is facing an impossible situation under the employment control framework. Bernadette has again reiterated that austerity won't work.

There is simply nothing left to cut that will not seriously damage the primary education service given to our children. Given the equality debate we had this morning it will probably come as no surprise to you that most of the cuts to date affect the most vulnerable in our society, resource teachers for travellers, visiting teachers for travellers, rural coordinators in area of rural disadvantage and language support teachers for pupils who don't have English as their first language will be the first to be hit. As always the most vulnerable get hit first and hit hardest. This is particularly hard to take

colleagues when the untouchables, or the sly and mighty as referred to this morning, who presided over the collapse of our economy, have walked away with obscene pensions and lump sums taken unashamedly from the mouths of the next generation.

The class size in Gael Scoilanna has been adjusted to the same level as the ordinary primary school thereby increasing their class sizes. Currently Ireland has the second highest class sizes in the EU and has the fourth lowest expenditure in education in thirty one OECD countries. Part D of this motion demands that the Government priorities investment in education and increase spending to a level comparable to other developed countries as part of this strategy to achieve economic recovery. Now at least 90% of you delegates here in front of me have most likely been in a class of thirty and some of you were probably in a class of forty or over, in your primary school. In 1998 class size was 32 pupils to one teacher in 2007 it reduced to 27 to one, which was its lowest and it's now back up to 28 to one. We may well end up with the highest class sizes in Europe.

This is against a backdrop that Minister Rory Quinn will launch his literacy and numeracy strategy this Friday. I don't want to pre-empt his proposals but I do know that there will be up to a thousand newly qualified primary teachers next September who will have no teaching jobs. I call on the Minister to get these teachers into schools, to do what they spend three years training for at the expense of the state. That will go a long way to boosting literacy and numeracy figures. It will also reduce the numbers on the live register and it will allow these teachers to complete their probationary year and be recognised as fully qualified teachers internationally, to be a win-win solution all round. In this context I welcome the establishment of the ICTU economic research unit and I would welcome an examination of the cost effectiveness or otherwise of training teachers and then not allowing them to contribute to the economy and society.

Finally the children of the nation will be paying for the sins of the greedy minority and incompetent Government for their entire lives. Surely the least we can do is give them a proper education to equip them for the challenges they most certainly will face. I urge to support the Motion.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Delegate. Seconder?

Noel Ward, INTO

Just two points President, Noel Ward, INTO. Just to say that when the Taoiseach spoke here on Monday evening he spoke about services that we could afford and I was waiting for him to come to services that we could not afford to do without, services like health and like education. In the context that Noirin has outlined of further cuts coming our way in the education service, I just want to say that the INTO and I'm sure the other teacher unions had no intention of sitting on our hands while the education service is attacked and just education is an investment, it's a key one for over half a million children in primary schools and another three to four hundred thousand in post primary schools in this jurisdiction and we just call on colleagues throughout the trade union movement to stand up with us for education in the months ahead. Thank you very much.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Noel and now can we have a mover for Motion 35 in the name of the TUI?

Peter MacMenamin, TUI

President, Colleagues, Peter MacMenanim, TUI.

Just to follow on in the theme that has been set by the speakers from the INTO, the motion that is here in the name of the TUI asserts as has been established before that education is, spending on education is investment and I was very pleased to see in the film at the very beginning, not the one we saw forty-five times, but the film we saw at the very beginning did recognise investment in education as being a key to economic development, and I welcome that. We're told by some of the bureaucrats that seek to run an economy rather than a society that we actually can't afford to do these things. I think that this Congress must fundamentally disagree with that. We cannot afford not to educate our young people. To not educate people is going to be a very costly in the longer term to our society. We know that education benefits the society, benefits the individual, benefits the employment prospects and benefits the economy as a whole and as such investment is absolutely essential. I completely agree with the previous speakers who have talked about the cutbacks in education.

We were invited as unions to the Department of Education skills within the last fortnight and we were told that the intention of the Government is to cut a further three hundred and fifty million out of the teacher payroll over the next three budgets and we were asked to volunteer suggestions as to how we might do that. Now colleagues I trust that Congress will join with us and saying we cannot afford to do that, we will not put forward suggestions as to how the education service can be cut further. It is our view that it is more than cut to the bone. It is cut deep into the bone and it is doing lasting damage to the young people. We cannot afford to allow this to continue and it is time to say stop.

The central point of this motion President is to seek to put a target on spending. We all know that there is a target on spending on overseas aid of 0.7%, never been reached but it is a target and it is a laudable target. We are suggesting here that a target on spending in education of 7% of GDP is a realistic target. It will do what has been stated earlier and move the spending in our country up to the appropriate level and is likely to provide the quality education that we know the young people and indeed the not so young people and the people retraining and indeed the older people who want to continue in education. It will provide the education service that they demand, that they are entitled to do and that they should have as a right as being citizens of our country. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Peter. Secunder?

Bernie Ruane, TUI

Chairperson, Bernie Ruane, President of TUI seconding the motion. We've got to the change our way of thinking about education. Investment in education is looked on as current spending, when in fact it should be looked on as capital because it is long-term investment. Previous Governments failed to invest adequately in education during the so called Celtic Tiger era. Of course we now know that in fact the tiger was in fact a snake with fur. Education is for the public good, it affects everything else. It affects our health system, it affects whether we will have social unrest in our communities or not. Education is

a basic right for everyone. Everyone should be entitled to reach their maximum potential. Way back in the 60's education was for the privileged, the way this Government is withdrawing money from the education system it seems it's happening all over again. Our children today are being deprived of resources which they badly need. Children yet unborn are going to be deprived unless our Government stands up to the Troika and demands that we do not cut our education system any further because there's nothing more to cut. Investment is the word, education is the key and it's a right for every child. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you delegate and now can I call the mover of Motion 36 in the name of the NASUWT?

Fred Brown, NASUWT

President, Congress, Fred Brown, NASUWT. The basic principle of a just society I believe is from each according to ability and to each according to need, and too many young people are deprived of their right to give according to their ability. The recovery is going to depend on people being able to play their full part in society, both as workers and as consumers and that's fairly obvious to anybody who's not a millionaire. Yet against all this logic jobs are being destroyed and people have their living standards debased. We in the NASUWT want to join in the entire Trade Union Movement in campaigning to fight against cuts to funding and education, to fight for investment in school buildings so that our children are being taught in buildings which are fit for purpose, to extend the provision of educational support for the most vulnerable of the children in our society, to ensure that there is proper financial support for post sixteen students, to provide high quality careers education for all of our young people and to provide high quality vocational education for all sixteen to twenty-five year olds. While our young people are deprived of the right to work and while child poverty increases the rich continue to get richer on bonuses which are bigger than what many of our young people will earn in their entire lives. We should be angry and our young people should be angry. Low wages and unemployment remove the things which any civilised person should expect a fair share in the goods of society. We have all been lied to. We've told that we're all in this together. People who benefited from a free third level education say this to students who are going to be burdened with debt for years. People who have accrued more money than they can ever hope to spend say this and produce policies which take away jobs and which make people homeless. We have been lied to when they say there is no alternative. Here are two alternatives, get the taxes which are being avoided by the very rich and implement a Robin Hood tax, a tax on financial transactions such as the European Trade Unions are advocating. Howard Wilson once spoke of squeezing the rich until a pip squeak. That still seems to be a very good idea to me. Any viable future for our society depends on jobs being created and in order for people to be able to do high quality jobs they need a high quality education and I don't mean by this a divisive system of lithe academic education and a lower status vocational education. I mean an education which gives our young people and our older workers what they need to be able to do their chosen work to the best of their ability and to take part in the culture of our civilisation and make it accessible to all, an education which is both for work and for leisure.

People like me ought really to have been pushed aside a bit by some of our young people. One of the things that we need to do, and as teachers we need to do it as well, is to make sure that our young people know about trade unions. Somebody yesterday spoke about tax books in which the trade unions are obliterated when it comes to talking about how our society works. Well we need to say there are trade unions, we are trade unionists, this is what we do, this is what we need to do and this is what you can do to take a full part in this. And those of us who are teachers need to take some control of the curriculum and make sure that we are doing this and that we are telling the truth and that we are countering the lies which are being told to our young people.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Delegate. Seconder? Formally seconded? Thank you Seamus and now if I can call on the mover of Motion No. 37 in the name of IFUT, Mike?

Mike Jennings, IFUT

Thank you Jack. Mike Jennings of the Irish Federation of Universal Teachers proposing Motion No. 37 and can I say Delegates and Chairman that I am proud that had time allowed it this resolution would have been seconded by our colleagues and friends from the University and College and Union in Northern Ireland. So I think it's an example of cross border and cross trade union cooperation which is very much appreciated.

Delegates last Thursday a permanent lecturer of eight years standing in Trinity College Dublin was made compulsorily redundant. An assistant librarian, also a permanent member of staff of Trinity College Dublin is awaiting her compulsory redundancy on the 10th of August. Two permanent researchers in the National University of Galway were made redundant in the last few months and similar fate has befallen a permanent researcher in University College Cork. Now while all this is happening academics and people in universities have had their pay cut by 20% and that margin is 30% in respect of new staff. At the same time we're seeing that we have proudly the highest number of students ever in third level in this country and we're doing that with a reduction of fifteen hundred staff with more reductions to come in these coming months. And at this time what do you think was the major preoccupation of the media with regard to these education stories? Was it the fact that a lecturer who is not even entitled to apply for a job in the university unless he or she has a minimum of eight years post leaving cert study behind him or her is paid the princely sum of thirty three thousand Euro? No. What preoccupied the media last week was that the Sunday Times managed to find that one person out of every fourteen in the university sector is paid one hundred thousand Euro. Well I'm not here to speak for them because I can tell you not many of them are in my union. We represent the people who are at the lower base substantially. But I do make no apologies for the existence of competitive rates if we're going to have an internationally viable university system, we have to pay appropriate rates and considering where the savings have been cut I don't think it's outrageous that such a small proportion of people whoever could achieve it at the end of their career might achieve something approaching those internationally competitive rates.

But surprisingly delegates I am here to say something, a good news story about higher education because I think it needs to be said and the good news is and despite all the odds this country has a first class higher education system. And I'm also very proud to say as I've already said that we have the highest participation rates ever in higher education.

We have more students than ever in higher education and I think that it beholds us to recall that it was a Minister from the labour movement who abolished third level fees and don't let anybody tell you that it made no difference. It can be no coincidence that we have the highest participation rates in Europe because we have abolished tuition fees. And yes it is true that graduates do enjoy higher salaries than non graduates and yes it's true that graduates are less likely to be unemployed than non graduates so therefore what you do is whether they are graduates or whether they are not if they earn more, you tax them more, that's what you do in a fair society. You don't cut off the income and the entry into universities by charging people. The sort of stories that we have seen told about the education system, I believe is to prepare the ground, it's to soften up progressive people such as the people in this room to believe that somehow we can't afford a university system. We can't afford not to have a university system. It's our system, it's for our children, and we shouldn't be squeezed out by the children of the rich. Every child has the right to higher education. Please support the Motion.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Mike. Is there a seconder? Is it formally seconded? Formally seconded. . Thank you. Now is there anyone offering to speak on Motions 34, 35, 36 and 37? One speaker.

Alison Miller, NIPSA

Conference Alison Miller, NIPSA seeking remission of Motion No. 34. In relation to what the majority of the move of what the Motion said we have no difficulty with but the reason for seeking remission of this Motion which causes NIPSA some concern is paragraph D, which states that the Government must prioritise investment in education and increase spending in education to a level comparable to other developed countries. Conference NIPSA fully recognises that education provides and plays a critical role and influences life chances for all. It is important that our young people get the best start in life with those who wish to access in further in higher education find no barriers to accessing that education to enable them to fulfil their full potential.

Conference we must however ensure we don't prioritise one public service over another at the cost of another public service and a members job in that public service. I would suggest that Governments, both North and South would welcome the Trade Union Movement seeking to divert resources, to specific public services at the cost of another. In fact that is a constant call from politicians both north and south asking the Trade Union Movement and I think the mover of Motion 35 indicated that it is in fact a constant call from politicians asking the Trade Union Movement where we want to prioritise spending or where we want to prioritise cuts. Don't let us fall into this dangerous trap. Conference I would suggest rather than to seek to prioritise one public service over another, that collectively we fight to ensure there are no cuts in any areas of the public sector, all of which are vital public services delivered by our public service members. Conference allow Congress to take the sentiments of this Motion forward in a positive way but avoid the pitfalls of prioritising one public service over another and all the dangers and traps that this will cause. Conference for these reasons please support remission of Motion No. 34.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you delegate and while the INTO is considering the request to remit there's one speaker on Motion 36.

Brian Wilson, NIPSA

Conference Brian Wilson, NIPSA speaking in support of this Motion. To be fair the motion is extremely comprehensive and just about covers exactly what type of action we need to take as a Trade Union Movement. Young people upon leaving third level education are immediately in debt and even if they don't go into third level education, say for talks sake they want to set up home, they can't because of the amount of money it takes to actually put down for a deposit on a house. The major stumbling block however is the fact that increasingly regardless of qualifications, jobs are extremely few and far between, I mean the dogs in the street know this. So what happens? Instead of trying to address the issue you have the likes of the Department of Working Pensions Secretary in GB in Duncan Smith more or less saying to employers here lads try not to employ any more Polish workers or any more other foreign nationalists on your farms. The simple reason is you could give those jobs to the young people. Now not only is it patronising but it's racist too.

The other thing is as well, employers are quite happy with this, I mean you almost get a sense that they would go one step further, I mean what's next? Chaining young people together at the side of a road somewhere with scythes in their hands as part of useful public works or something like that, hacking away at weeds with somebody, almost 'cool hand Luke style' standing there with a shotgun and a pair of mirrored sunglasses trying to keep them in line. What's next for young people?

There are high levels of youth unemployment is actually a by product of these austerity measures full stop, end of story. It's actually a measuring stick that all politicians will try and divert your gaze from but it's the truth. People have mentioned several times at this podium about lost generations so I would say see before we do actually lose them would it not be sort of responsible of us as a Trade Union Movement to actually sit down and engage with our younger members? You know sometimes we have a tendency to think of older people as right they know exactly what they are doing and to be honest with you we know that you don't have all the answers. So why not try encourage us to come through and try to learn from you because that's what we want to do.

Jack O'Connor, President

Alright thank you delegate. That's it. Now there are no further speakers offering but in relation to this question of the remission of motion No. 34 which was moved by NIPSA is there a seconder for the proposals to remit first of all? Formally seconded. Now does the INTO wish to exercise right of reply?

Noirin Flynn, INTO

Thank you President. Can I just clarify for the hall here? I'm not speaking to prioritise education above any other service in Ireland. Can I just reiterate the points to you that I made about the OECD Report Education at a Glance 2010 which shows that Ireland's education expenditure is the fourth lowest of thirty one OECD countries. What I am suggesting to you and what this Motion suggests is that we're looking to bring our education system up to international standards and that is the spirit of the Motion. All of the speakers in education here have spoken about the need to prioritise education and that is simply what this Motion is saying as well. Believe me I am not here to eat anybody else's dinner that is not what is meant by this motion. And these services can be provided

with a proper taxation system which has been called for as well. I ask you not to remit this motion. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Delegate. Now there's a proposal to remit Motion 34 which as been moved and seconded which is not being accepted by the movers, by the INTO so I'm going to put the proposal to remit first. All in favour please show? All against? Abstentions. The proposal to remit is defeated and I put Motion No. 34 to the floor. All in favour please show. All against? Abstentions? I declare the Motion carried.

Motion 35 in the name of the TUI all in favour please show? All against? Abstentions? I declare the Motion carried.

Motion No. 36 in the name of the NASUWT all in favour please show? All against? Abstentions. I declare the Motion carried.

And Motion 37 on Financing Higher Education in the name of IFUT all in favour please show? All against? Abstentions. I declare the Motion carried.

And Section 3 of the Report on the Social Deficit. I'm putting the section to the floor. All in favour of adoption please show? All against? Abstentions. I declare the section of the Report adopted.

And now in accordance with our original schedule I'm moving to Section 6 of the Principle Executive Committee Report, Chapter 1 Europe and the Wider World and I'm calling for the mover of Motion 38 Belfast and Districts Trade Council?

Kerry Fleck, Belfast District Trades Council

Comrades the importance of this motion cannot be underestimated. The actions taken by the US Government and others is a clear demonstration of what is wrong with this world and in particular the prevailing social and economic system. This system is nothing to do with world peace, equal distribution of wealth or support for democracy. This system is one which is about protecting global capital, supporting the relentless drive of multinational corporations to wrestle control of the worlds finances away from sovereign governments and into the sleazy and murderous hands of shareholders and business. The US recognises that wiki leaks and wiki leaks type activity presents a threat to its demands that the world conforms to its vision of society. The US is attempting to impose their legal system and their concept of freedom and expression, freedom of expression on the rest of the world. A recent example was seen of the US putting pressure on the Greek Government to stop aid ships to Gaza from leaving Greek Ports. The US are exploiting economic weakness and turning it to political pressure. In such a climate the importance of transparency and access to information to democracy cannot be ignored. The US is continuing to up the ante on Wikileaks-type activity. In November 2010 when attacking those who use on line media the champion transparency of Government, Hillary Clinton referred to it, not just as an attack on America's foreign policy but an attack on the international community. Clinton preaches to the world about countries such as China and Syria interfering with people's access to the internet and to information, yet when on line media is used to expose the US they are prepared to raise it to an act of war. The internet and new technology has opened up new freedoms and access to information

which has aided democratic development across the world. US and the West hold themselves up as defenders of freedom and democracy yet they are seeking to clamp down on these new freedoms. Indeed the US allowed and encouraged ??? (Tape 10, 757) and political figures to call for the assassination of Julian Assange and broke its own laws in relation to the brutal and horrendous treatment of Bradley Manning. This behaviour must be resisted. Our Motion calls for Congress to oppose the efforts of the US to criminalise and financially destroy Wiki Leaks, it calls for an international red cross investigation into the treatment of Bradley Manning and it calls for Congress to defend and reaffirm every citizen's fundamental right to whistle blow and expose illegality, corruption and aligning of Governments to corporations. Please support the motion.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Delegate. Is there a seconder? Is it formally seconded? Formally seconded. Now can I move to Motion No. 39 on Palestine which is being moved by UNISON?

Patricia McKeown, UNISON

President, Brothers and Sisters, Patricia McKeown, UNISON moving Motion No. 39.

Rarely the resolutions passed at this Congress attract international attention. However that has been the case in particular since 2007 on our position in support of the people of Palestine. It has provoked a positive response from the Palestinians people themselves who are heartened to know that they have support outside their own country and it has provoked bullying responses from the Israeli Government and their minders. Motion acknowledges the extraordinary work that has been done by this Congress since 2007 and seeks to advance our policy in three particular areas.

In the first we're calling for Congress to bring together civil society, churches and other like minded organisations who share our policy on boycott, divestment and sanctions, in particular to move forward the consumer boycott campaign.

On the second action it is one which we have some power over as the Trade Union Movement. It calls for an education programme which will allow us to move further forward on the divestment and sanctions element of our policy, on the divestment element in particular we do have control over where we as unions invest our own funds, where we invest our pensions and we have a large say in where public money is invested and not one penny of any of that money should serve to bolster a regime guilty of war crimes, oppression, breeches of international law and the removal of the fundamental rights of the people.

On the third we're calling for Congress to support the commitment and courage of those and we will hear more of the flotilla later in the emergency motion but also those who seek to breach the siege of Gaza by land as well as by sea. I commend the Communications Workers Union in the North which has now proposed recently that there'll be a further overland expedition of humanitarian aid to break the siege of Gaza and they want that to be a Trade Union convey, they want it to have the support of all affiliates, they want to take it through Europe and have the support of European Trade Unions and we have pledged our support to that and Trade Union friends at Palestine who pledged support to that and we as a Trade Union Movement and this is imminently doable.

I want to pay particular tribute to a guest we have with us at this Conference. Over one fifth of the Delegates of this conference had the honour to listen to a young woman, who is not only a trade union activist, a very serious one, but also an international advocate on behalf of her people, Palestinian refugees in their millions displaced around this planet. She's also a poet of some renown and yesterday in her quite way she told us, she shared with us not only her own experience but that of the Palestinian refugees. She moved us all. We want to say thank you for that Rafiff Seada, please bring back on behalf of this Congress our very best wishes for all of your people and our reaffirmation of our commitment to your struggle and to your right to return.

In conclusion I want to say that there are bullies on the field with stunning effect as we have seen in the flotilla and the response of several countries. Our own Government I know comes under pressure on this issue but it is time to speak up and speak out and we're saying very clearly to the Irish Government if your being put economic or political pressure to do the wrong thing in respect of this issue and not support the Palestinian people, we will support you to do the right thing, but if you don't do the right thing we will call you into account. Thank you I move.

Jack O'Connor, President

Is there a seconder? Is it formally seconded? Is it formally seconded? Formally seconded. Thank you. Now to move to Motion 40 in the name of Derry Trades Council on solidarity with the Palestinian people. Anne.

Anne Donnolly, Derry Trades Council

President, Delegates I'll be very brief because I want to give way to the Emergency Motion. This motion acknowledges the excellent work done by Congress so far and calls for three more actions. The first is that the new Executive explore the potential for an All Ireland Declaration for Palestine. The second is that we register a strong protest to the Israeli Government. The third is that we seek a meeting with the Irish Government pressing it to take action. From what the General Secretary said this afternoon this is already started. This Congress has a proud record of standing strong for the Palestinian people. Please support this Motion and keep the pressure on. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Anne. Is there a seconder?

Dominic Murray, Derry Trades Council

Dominic Murray, UNISON and Trade Union friends of Palestine. President, Congress I support the motion by Derry Trades Council and also acknowledge their sterling work in getting Derry City Council to pass a boycott divestment and sanctions motion in the City. Newry City Council have also passed a similar motion.

My own union, UNISON has also always taken its lead from the Palestinian people themselves and a significant development the Palestinian Trade Union Coalition with one voice have called for a campaign of boycott divestment and sanctions and praised ICTU on their 2007 motions. But it's vitally important that we keep moving forward and one suggestion which has already been made there is a land-led convey to the open prison that is Gaza. Our President Jack O'Connor rightly stated yesterday he considers

Palestine to be the victim of the greatest single injustice in the modern world today. We became involved with the Trade Union Movement to fight injustice wherever we see it and so we should. Some years ago Irish Trade Unions were to the fore in opposition to the brutal apartheid machine in South Africa. Apartheid still exists here today in Palestine. None other than ex-President Jimmy Carter, Nelson Mandela and the UN say so. As Bishop Desmond Tutu has stated 'if you're a neutral in situations of injustice you have chosen the state of the oppressor'. I urge you to support this motion.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you. Now I want to call on the Chairman of the Scrutineers to make an announcement.

Billy Hannigan, PSEU

Billy Hannigan, PSEU Chair of Scrutineers. During the announcement of the election results I indicated that the gender quota rule had been applied in favour of Carol Scheffer and declared her elected to the Executive Council. This was an error. The gender quota rule should not have been applied and as a result Jim Moore from UCAT should have been elected to the Executive Council, and Carol Shafer should not have benefited from the gender quota rule. Could I on behalf of the Scrutineers apologise to Conference and I have spoken to Carol and have apologised to her also. Thank you very much. So Jim Moore is elected in place of Carol Scheffer. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Billy. I just want to announce that the winner of the Global Solidarity Draw is Sean O'Neill of the ASTI and there's a voucher available to be picked up from the Congress desk outside at the end of Conference. So if Sean is still here, congratulations Sean.

Now we've had Motions 38, 39 and 40 have been moved and seconded. There was an Emergency Motion provided for in Standing Orders Report No. 5 and I want to invite Eamon Devoy to do that.

Eamon Devoy, TEEU

Good evening colleagues. Devoy, TEEU proposing the Emergency Motion on the sabotaging of the Irish ship to Gaza. There are seven unions whose names are down against this motion and I want to extend my thanks and appreciation to those other unions who felt it was appropriate for me to move the Motion on the basis that the engineer on board the ship, Pat Fitzgerald he's know as a member of the TEEU, an active member of the TEEU but he's also on Sinn Fein Counsellor in Waterford so people may know him from that reputation also.

There was a flotilla, two of a series of ships going out of Europe to bring humanitarian aid to Palestine. The Irish ship was the MV Saoirse and when it was refuelling in Turkey the boat was sabotaged by plastic explosives as was another ship on the same day in a Greek port from the same flotilla. Exactly the same damage, exactly the same way, plastic explosives disabled the propeller shaft in such a fashion and Pat has made a comprehensive report on this from his engineering knowledge, the damage was designed so that the shaft would fail at sea. It would go out of balance and it would actually have hold the hull of the ship causing the ship to sink at sea. Now you can speculate as to who's

responsible for that but there was another ship exactly twelve months ago boarded by the Israeli Army and they killed without equivocation nine humanitarian aid workers and we were able to even see it on television, you couldn't hide that one. So you can guess who it was, I'm certainly happy enough to guess that they were agents of the Israeli Government and I have no difficulty in saying that. A number of us were disappointed with the response from Eamon Gilmore as the Minister for Foreign Affairs, when he addressed the issue. But I think the General Secretary has made it clear today that he is engaged with Eamon Gilmore on this issue and I'm happy to leave it in the capable hands of the General Secretary.

So the motion calls on this Conference to condemn the covert and illegal act of sabotage on the Irish ship to Gaza that was conveying humanitarian aid to the besieged people of Palestine. The ship was travelling through international waters towards the Port of Gaza that was going nowhere near Israel and since Gaza has its own international waters there was no basis whatsoever for the attack that was made on this ship and other ships and indeed it calls into question why the Greeks attacked their own ship recently. They must have been trying to impress somebody in the IMF, however the Israeli blockade is illegal, it's inappropriate and it must end now and I think it would be appropriate, the motion has already been adopted by Congress to boycott Israeli goods and if we don't get this matter resolved soon we should intensify that campaign. I formally move the motion.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Eamon. Is it seconded? Formally seconded? Formally seconded. Thank you delegates now are there any speakers on Motion 38, 39, 40 or the Emergency Motion?
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Michael Robinson, NIPSA

Michael Robinson, a member of NIPSA and Trade Union friends of Palestine to speak in support of Motion 39 which is from UNISON.

The motion calls for the BDS Campaign to have life breathe into it and it talks about engaging with civil society organisations and church groups and that. I was involved in helping to bring over a delegation of people from the Christian churches from Palestine who had launched the Kairos Declaration and they described, they came last year, they met the Irish President, they met the Deputy First Minister in the North and the report back we got from them was that it was the most heartening event they'd ever been at. They went back to Palestine with hope in their hearts. What they said about the situation on the ground in their Declaration is 'Israeli settlements ravage our land in the name of God and in the name of force controlling our natural resources, including water and agricultural land thus depriving hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in constituting in obstacle to any political solution'. They are very clear in their call for boycott divestment and sanctions. They regard that as they say to integrate the logic of peaceful resistance. They say these campaigns must be carried out with courage, openly sincerely proclaiming that their object is not revenge but rather to put an end to the existing evil, liberating both the perpetrators and the victims of the injustice and the Palestinians are victims of a very great injustice and that injustice is known, what's happening in Gaza is known because we have the benefit of wiki leaks and the wiki leaks document show that the American Embassy had been told their document says there's really officials have confirmed to embassy officials on multiple occasions that they intend to keep the Gazan economy

functioning at the lowest level possible consistent with avoiding a humanitarian crisis. But there is a humanitarian crisis and Chris Gunnis from the UN Relief and Works Agency said lets look at the basic human facts in the ground. 95% of all water in Gaza is undrinkable, 40% of all diseases waterborne is caused by poor water, 45.2% of the labour force is unemployed, 80% aid dependency and he goes on. He says lets get rid of the blockade and there'll be no need for flotilla and there is no need for the blockade either. There is an agreement on movement and access between the EU, Israel and the Egyptians and Israel is falling down on that and the ICTU should be pressing the Irish Government to have that agreement reopened again. Those borders should be opened for trade.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thanks Delegate. Pat.

Pat Bolger, IMPACT

Comrades, President, Comrades, Delegates Pat Bolger, IMPACT. I'm glad to be at the mike and I've been told by the union to make sure I got up to the mike to support the Emergency Motion. I know it's late in the evening and people are tired but we've come to the mike just to show by doing that that we really, really strongly support the motion and that a wrong doing must be always opposed. So lest anyone think that these are token motions that we've added our support to we really strongly urge support to the motion.

On the basis then of being honest with delegates as well our CEC has a reserved position on Motions 39 and 40 but we wouldn't heroically seek to have them remitted but I just want to make some small comments on that if I may chair. There are some technical elements in the Motions that our Executive don't fully see the value of and we're happy that the Executive and the report to the Executive Council deals with these matters extensively in the Report, but again in case anyone thinks we're out of solidarity though on the cause I've come up to reaffirm our total support and ongoing for the BDS and we've given money and staff time to it so I urge you to support Emergency Motion No. 4. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Pat. Any further speakers in these Motions?

Tom Hogan, Waterford Council of Trade Unions

The Waterford Council of Trade Unions would like to support Motion 38 condemning the appalling treatment of Bradley Manning and indeed the criminalisation of Julian Assange and if I may must for a moment draw comparison to a local issue involving the US Government is the case of Sean Garland a lifelong socialist and republican who's accused of the US Government of being involved in a dollar forgery conspiracy involving amongst others North Korea. At the core of this case is a fundamentally fraud procedure that involves the grand jury. Sean Garland was accused before a grand jury and indicted by a grand jury and of course this is universally condemned as it doesn't allow the accused to be represented at these hearings and they are held in secret. Now Sean Garland has also been a critic of the US policy over the last forty years, from Asia to Cuba to the Iraq War etc. and this is politically motivated charge in trying to extradite him. The request was put to Condoliza Rice in the very last days of the Bush Government and was signed, and it was part of a policy of victimising people who had contact with countries that the US Government didn't approve of.

Sean Garland's campaign has the support of a significant number of Trade Unions, of artists, of academics and other prominent people and religious). His hearing is coming up on the 19th of July and I would ask the unions and the individuals that are involved in it to become more engaged as we get nearer to the date and those delegates who haven't in their unions to become in engaged in that, and we're going to support Motion 38. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Tom. Now I'm in severe difficulty in relation to time and unless somebody really needs to speak ... Section 6 yes?

Brian Moore, NIPSA

President thanks. I'll try and be brief. Brian Moore, NIPSA. And I just want to speak briefly this Section 6 of the Report. In Section 6 it says in Global Solidarity the Congress Global Solidarity Committee is active on a wide range of social, justice and development issues, working in conjunction with national and international networks to maximise the impact of the solidarity activity. Nobody is opposed to that in fact I've been working for a lot of years on international solidarity. All I want to do it to say to the Executive is that we've heard a lot this week about cooperation and also about deficits. Well there's a solidarity deficit at the moment in the North and that is that we don't have a Global Solidarity Committee. There's a number of reasons for that but what I'd ask the incoming Executive to do is to look at how we can either, there's no resources available to help support a Global Solidarity Committee in the North. Then we look at new ways of dialogue and communications with the committees are those union committees in the North that work on solidarity issues so we can maximise the impact across the Island of Ireland on solidarity issues. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Delegate. Now I'm going to move to the vote on those Motions. All in favour of Motion 38 in the name of Belfast Trades Council please show? All against? Abstentions. I declare them ... Sorry I've taken that Motion already, my apologies Delegates.

Motion 39, still enough time to do it right. Motion 39 Delegates in the name of UNISON. All in favour of Motion 39 please show? All against? Abstentions. I declare the Motion carried with some abstentions.

Motion 40 in the name of Derry Trades Council all in favour please show? All against? Abstentions. I declare the Motion carried with some abstentions.

The Emergency Motion all in favour please show? All against. Abstentions. I declare the Motion carried.

And now Delegates we arrived at the Motion we should have done in the beginning Motion 41 on Columbia in the name of Kildare Council of Trade Unions and I want to call Adrian Kane.

Adrian Kane, Kildare Trades Council

Thanks very much President. Adrian Kane moving Motion 41 on Columbia. Columbia is the most dangerous country in the world to be a trade unionist. Research carried out by amnesty international indicates coordinated strategies exist between the Colombian State Military and Paramilitary Deck Squads to make the work of trade unionists impossible through assassination and intimidation. Over two and a half thousand trade unionists have been killed in Colombia in the last fifteen years whilst trying to defend the right to collective bargaining and freedom of speech. ITUC state that the conviction rate for the murders of trade union members in Columbia is 1%. They said in Columbia to be trade unionist is to walk with a gravestone on your back.

The Irish branch for Justice for Columbia was established in December 2008 by Mick Dowling and Stellan Hermansson. Justice for Columbia is a trade union network that works in solidarity with trade unions in Columbia. Today twelve of Congress' affiliated unions and five Trade Councils have affiliated to the Justice for Columbia group. To date the group has lobbied intensely against the free trade agreement between the EU and Columbia. The group campaigns for the release of political prisoners and has been part of the campaign that has secured the release of Rosalba Gaviria in recent weeks. Justice for Columbia has also organised several public meetings in Ireland with visiting Columbian Trade Unionists. In recent times there have been some tentative improvements in the situation in Columbia and I think this has happened for a number of reasons. The replacement of President Uribe by the former Defence Minister Santos has led the Columbian Government for the first time to recognise that the route of the violence in Columbia is that of a civil conflict. The continuing shift to the left of the entire Continent has also had an isolating effect on the Columbian Government. There are still however regular assassinations. It is therefore imperative that the pressure is maintained on the Columbian Government and to this end the motion calls on Conference to encourage that all congress affiliates to join the Irish Branch of Justice for Columbia, to continue the ICTU support for the campaign against EU for Columbia Free Trade Agreement as long as human and trade union rights are not represented in Columbia, continue Congress' support in the campaign to free political prisoners in Columbia and to continue to develop relations with the Columbian Trade Union Congress. The amendment proposed by the TEEU is acceptable to the Kildare Council of Trade Unions. Thank you very much.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Adrian. Is there a seconder? Oh wait now there is a seconder here.

John O'Brian, INTO

John O'Brian from INTO and Secretary of Justice of Columbia, speaking to second this Motion.

Just addressing very briefly two quick questions that are often put our way. Why Columbia in the first place and why is this motion needed? Why Columbia and not another country? And yes we are fully aware that there are countries throughout the world where trade unionists and human rights activists are being killed, but in Columbia the murders are carried out at an alarming rate and without any redress or justice because of the repeated lack of will or the inactivity of Columbian Governments over decades to act on these murders and the intimidation.

Just to give two recent examples to put it in perspective into current time. May 23rd a man named Carlos Castro Casais, he's a 41 year old Engineer and trade union leader, shot dead while he was at work. No police investigations. June 7th, a couple of weeks ago, a woman by the name of Anna Cordova, Community Leader and member of the Woman's Peace Movement, also killed while she travelled on a bus. Despite what the Santos Government has said about the changes they are making since the departure of the former President Uribe, people who are brave enough to speak up for local communities and workers seeking the return of stolen land, or the improvement of workers conditions continue to be murdered by paramilitaries and there's no action by the police or the law enforcement agents.

The US and EU must be challenged in their assumption that rewarding such a regime with Free Trade Agreements will improve matters and we in the Trade Union Movement must continue that challenge. The motion is to encourage the currently affiliated unions to maintain support for the Justice for Columbia Campaign and ask unions who have not as yet affiliated to do so. We need to the funds to continue the work that we have set out in the Executive Report on page 115, and the work so far has been substantial and we need the funds because it's difficult to source the funds elsewhere. So I second the motion. Thank you very much.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you John. There's an amendment in the name of the TEEU. Is there a mover for the amendment to the name of the TEEU. It's formally moved. Is it formally seconded? Formally seconded thank you Eamon. Now one minute Patricia.

Patricia McKeown, UNISON

President, brothers and sisters I think this will be of interest to the Irish Congress. We have been working with Justice for Columbia UK. They have constructed an early day Motion which is to be set shortly before the House of Commons. It is calling on the British Government as a cosignatory with the Irish Government to support and engage any form of peace process that may be emerging in Columbia. It's also proposing that a delegation later this year visit Columbia and they hope to encourage representatives from all the political parties in the North who were part of the peace process to take part in that delegation as well as trade unionists across the Island. I'm hoping that by the end of this month there will be a meeting in Belfast with the Director of UK Justice for Columbia. I'd like to extend the invitation to Justice for Columbia Ireland and any trade union activists who are interested in this issue to try and take this part of the agenda a little further forward. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Patricia. Thirty five seconds delegate. You've used five already.

Brian Moore, NIPSA

Right, Brian Moore, NIPSA last but hopefully not least on this issue. NIPSA we've also been affiliated to Justice of Columbia UK for the last ten years and we will be looking obviously to the Irish section as well. I want to speak specifically to the FTA the Fair Trade Agreement would give the Columbian Government special trade references and the least we should do is use all our influences, a union movement, within the EUTC and JFC on the campaign to stop that Fair Trade Agreement. It would send completely the wrong signal

and demonstrate a despicable lack of regard for human and workers rights in Columbia that you've all heard about. If the USA, Canada and the EFTA group of countries can delay their trade agreements then the EU should do that, or else it will be out with the international consensus on this issue.

Since 2002 over 500 trade union activists have been murdered. Things aren't getting any better, they are getting worse. The union density in Columbia was about 15% 20 years ago. It's now only 5% and of that only 2% have collection bargain agreements, bargaining agreements. The EU's trade with Columbia is only point three percent so it's not about trade. It would actually send a signal that Columbia is politically acceptable, or the Columbian Government rather. We therefore support JFC in their call for an immediate halt to these negotiations. Thank you.

Jack O'Connor, President

Thank you Delegate. Are there any further speakers? No further speakers offering? So there is an amendment in the name of the TEEU to Motion 41. I'm putting the amendment first. All in favour of the amendment which has been accepted by the movers? All against? Abstentions. I declare the amendment carried and now the substantive motion as amended all in favour please show? All against? Abstentions. I declare the Motion carried and now Section 6 of the Report. I'm putting Section 6 of the Report. All in favour please show? All against? Abstentions. I declare Section 6 of the Report adopted and now the full Principal Report of the outgoing Executive Council. All in favour please show? All against? Abstentions. I declare the Report adopted and that completes the scheduled business. We're now moving to the closing ceremony and I want to call on the General Secretary to address Conference.

CLOSING CEREMONY

David Begg, General Secretary

President and colleagues, there's just a few people I want to thank as I always do at the end of Conference. First of all all our fraternal guests and the people who participated in different stages of the Conference during the week and their willingness to travel here and to make themselves available, I want to thank them for that.

I want to thank the Chairman of Standing Orders, Michael Sharpe for the work he's done for this Congress over a long period of time. There's something terribly reassuring about Michael and he's managed to deal with all sorts of questions and queries over the years in a way that certainly gave us on the Secretariat great confidence and as a result I think most of our Conferences have run very, very well indeed. I want to thank you particularly for that Michael and of course by extension just to thank the other members of the Standing Orders Committee and indeed the Scrutineers and Tellers who have been so vital in conducting our Conference this week.

I want to thank my two immediate colleagues on the platform Sallyanne and Peter for their inputs to the Conference and the work indeed that they do for us and the work that they've done in setting up this Conference, and indeed all our Congress staff members who you've seen around during the week for their willingness and their helpfulness in trying to make this a successful event. I don't think any of them will mind particularly if I

say a special word of thanks to Eileen Sweeney because she's the Conference Organiser and she's put in a huge amount of work into it.

I'd like to congratulate the new Executive Council and wish them well in the coming two years. I want to congratulate the new Officer Board, first of all Patricia King and John Douglas who are the two Vice Presidents and Joe O'Flynn who's been returned as General Treasurer and Joe has really put in a great amount of work with us as I think he mentioned himself in his annual report. These two years have been quite difficult and we're very grateful to him and very obliged to him for what he's done. I want to congratulate Eugene and particularly Eugene and your election, it strikes me that Eugene is actually the sixth President that I will have worked with, which maybe as a Delegate suggested earlier on, maybe I haven't been around too long. But I'm looking forward to working with you Eugene and I'm sure we'll be very effective. I had the great pleasure of enjoying very good working relationships with all the Presidents I've worked with and I know Eugene will be no different. He's a man that's very well qualified in nearly every respect for this job. The only possible areas that I noticed he doesn't have a beard but that could be rectified. He's going to cost the colour writers a lot of angst if he doesn't rectify that, so welcome Eugene and looking forward very much to working with you.

I want to say a special word about Jack. Jack is, as I think Patricia pointed out in the earlier part of the week, he hates anyone saying anything positive about him at all but he can't just work so closely with Jack as I have had without acknowledging his great qualities. The first thing I want to say is that Jack was responsible for all the major initiatives of the last two years. It was his idea to set up the Trade Union Commission, his idea to establish the Economic Research Unit and his idea to ensure that we brought this advocacy of Congress to an international level, and we've been around with all of the important countries of Europe, we've been at the OECD and at the ECOFIN, that's the finance people of Europe, over the last three months or so and doing a lot of work in that regard and it is all been at his initiative. He's the most, I don't say this lightly, the most visionary and strategic leader that I have had the pleasure of coming across. He's a very exceptional man and as Patricia again pointed out, although he assumed office at the worst possible time and in fact the type of man he is, he didn't actually want to be President of Congress particularly, that's just simply because he is so self-effacing and didn't want to push himself forward for that role and really responded I think to the huge amount of pushing and persuasion from colleagues that he should do that, and it was lucky for us that he did assume the role at the difficult time he did because you know the old saying "cometh the hour, cometh the man". Jack was the man for that difficult time and really in a sense adversity is not the issue, it's how you deal with it and he dealt with it very, very well. As a result of his work and his leadership I think we have policies which are coherent, which are consistent and which most importantly are right. Also we have the structural basis to carry ourselves forward that we can contest the space for ideas, we can challenge the concept of the meta-narrative the idea there is only one way because ideas at the end of the day are what really count. As Keynes said at the end of the general theory it is ideas which are dangerous for good or ill and contesting that space for ideas over the next couple of years, we hopefully will make a big impression through the involvement of the Economic Research Unit which was his idea and his mission and he virtually created by cajoling and persuaded every union affiliated with the Congress to put up the funds to carry it through.

At the end of the day I suppose you know for all our faults and we all recognise that the Trade Union Movement has plenty of them, we really are the only thing that stands between the so called 'creative destruction of raw capitalism' and the ordinary people of the country and we have to sort of say well for better or for worse we're the people in the breach, we have to do the right thing by this generation of workers and as I mentioned we were very fortunate to have Jack's leadership at Congress level and very fortunate indeed that we continue to have it as a major force that he is leading the biggest Trade Union in the Congress.

Jack O'Connor, Outgoing President

Just a few words Delegates by way of reflection as I hand over the mantle, first of all I haven't ever heard Dave tell lies, nor can I recall very many errors of judgement but I do hope that what he said about my being the most strategic and visionary figure he's worked with in the Trade Union Movement isn't true because it augers very badly for the future I assure you, if that's the case.

Just a few things to say, first of all I did not aspire to be President of Congress. I found myself in the situation I think that not for the first time in my life I was everybody's second choice and people said you will do and I found myself in the space. It was and has been a great honour and an even greater responsibility. I don't know what people will say about how we carried on during the period of how the work was conducted but I want to be able to say to myself when the day comes for me to depart altogether in relation to my work and in relation to my life that I did what I could and I did do what I could. Many people have said that it was a difficult time and it was but not in the way that it's been said. It was a very difficult time for working people. It was a difficult time for the Trade Unionists of Columbia that I had the privilege of visiting.

In July of last year I was asked to participate in the human rights delegation. I would not have gone because of difficulties in my own union and so on were it not for the fact that failing to go would in itself have amounted to a statement and it did not want to be associated with such a statement. I had the privilege of meeting in the trade unionist of Columbia that I met the bravest people I've ever met or known and I think they are among the bravest people in the world and I committed to doing everything I could to assist them in whatever little way that I can and I intend to honour that for as long as it takes for them to achieve their entitlement to a say in the evolution of the history of their country. I did not.

It was a difficult time for the people of Palestine and I had very much intended to travel to Palestine but I was not able to honour that commitment and I still intend if the incoming Executive Council or a future Executive Council sees fit to arrange such an engagement I would ideally like to participate on it so as to honour that commitment in some small way. I would like to have done more. I would like us to have been able to do more to resist the awesome attack on working people and people who depend on public services which has been unfolding throughout my Presidency and over the preceding twelve months when I served as Vice President but we need a different movement to do more. Resistance requires organisation and it requires capacity and there is no point in going to war without an air force. That results in defeat and disaster and our people being slaughtered and I think the outcomes that we have achieved were as good as we could have achieved albeit that if we went about them in a different way we might have felt

somewhat better about it. And the way the movement feels about things is very important, I acknowledge. In relation to going to war without an air force as the General Secretary has said I played some small part, I think he overstated it, in trying to do some of the things that would equip working people to be able to undertake the task of influencing the shape of the Ireland which emerges from the current crisis. Equipping our movement with the capacity to think and to combat the other side in the battle for ideas, I thought that the economic research unit was essential, it received good support. I thought we would raise some more money. I think we're at about seventy five percent of where we need to be, but we need to do a bit more. I think as well that we should progress the basis of the Motion proposed by the ASTI in relation to the paper. I would have liked to have made some more progress on that and incidentally I could say it now, I couldn't say it earlier, but if I were voting I would have voted with the ASTI Motion and I hope we can work to progress that. I had hoped that we would make more progress on the work of the commission on trade union organisation. I was very encouraged by the report which emerged and the way it was treated. I did have greater aspirations for it but I'm very confident that the report which emerged and the engagement it received here at this Conference orders very well for the future. Except I have one reservation and it is this I have always believed that we could save the world, if we had a thousand years to do it, the problem is we don't and I just wonder if we're moving at too slow a pace and in that regard I am very very unhappy and disappointed to be stepping down as the President of Congress having failed to progress one of my aspirations which was the question of the funding of Congress. All Congress was run on a shoestring and as long as it's run on a shoestring it is not equal to the task that it has to discharge on behalf and in the interest of working people throughout the Island of Ireland and we have to face that issue Delegates and we have to face it very fast. Some significant development took place on the industrial front, mostly about building fortifications in a difficult situation. I actually received some credit for the Croke Park Agreement and a good deal of blame. I deserve neither actually, probably some of the blame but all the credit is due in particular to the previous President Peter McLoone who was then serving still in his capacity as chair of the Public Services Committee and the other officers of the committee and the Vice President here Patricia King.

I want to say thanks to a few people. I want to thank my own union, in particular and the Executive Council of my own union which tolerated my absence for the two years I served as President. I can recall meeting Sean Garland one day in the street and he said to me it must be very difficult to be trying to be President of Congress and President of SIPTU during this very difficult time and I said actually Sean it's the best thing that ever happened me because when they are looking for me in SIPTU I'm in Congress and when they're looking for me in Congress I'm in SIPTU. But I want to thank the Executive Council. I want to thank the Executive Committee of Congress and I want to thank the GPC for the way they tolerated my rather disorderly way of chairing meetings. And I want to thank also the Northern Ireland Committee which treated me with the utmost courtesy every time I went up there and I regret that I wasn't able to do more in that regard as well. I want to thank the other officers of Congress, my own colleagues Joe Flynn, the Treasurer, Patricia King, the Vice President and I want to say that I was able to fulfil, to some degree at least, the responsibility of President of Congress very much thanks to the role play by Patricia King but in our own union and in Congress because Patricia has assumed responsibility for the entire range of the industrial work of my own union in her role as Vice President and she has also played a very significant role in so far as the work of the

Vice President of Congress extends across the industrial arena and in acknowledging the role of Peter McLoone and the other Officers of the Public Services Committee. I want as well to acknowledge the very significant role that Patricia has continued to play both in the negotiation of and in the unfolding of the history of the Croke Park Agreement. In some much so incidentally that I'm not quite sure what's left to do when I go back to SIPTU. She said to me the other day we've find something for you, don't worry. I want to refer to Eugene McGlone the other Vice President later.

In relation to the staff I again want to acknowledge the very important work conducted by the staff of Congress in very often very difficult circumstances. More difficult incidentally that a lot of people appreciate. And I regret that very much that as I step down as President they are undergoing difficulties in relation to their own employment conditions as a result of the serious problems with the funding of Congress. I want to acknowledge the people I worked with, I want to acknowledge them all and thank them all but I want just specifically refer to the people I worked with and I know I will omit some ones name and please don't be offended it's not intended to give offence it's just incompetence. I want to mention David Joyce who worked on the Global Solidarity Committee, Liam Berney who I've worked with extensively over the years, Fergus Costello and Macdara Doyle. it's Fergus Whelan. Why did I say Fergus Costello? My apologies Fergus Whelan, my apologies Fergus. It's one thing forgetting somebody's name, it's another thing getting it wrong. I apologise most profusely. It's all down to Eugene McGlone putting me under pressure to vacate the stage.

I want to thank Paul Sweeney who I've worked with a great deal in his role as the economist in Congress but I've worked more closely with Peter Bunting and with Sallyanne Kinahan. Peter performs an enormous amount of work in very difficult circumstances in Northern Ireland. He has raised the profile of Congress during his tenure there and he has also performing continuously a great deal of work which doesn't receive any public attention by reason of the fact that public attention would undermine it but it's consistent with the traditional role play by our Congress in transcending the sectarian divide and trying to build unity among workers and I want to acknowledge Peter's role in that regard and I want as well to acknowledge the role of Sallyanne Kinahan who is one of the most dynamic and energetic and innovative people that has ever been my pleasure to work with or to know.

In the General Secretary's office itself I want to acknowledge the work of Natalie Fox who works with Eileen Sweeney. Natalie is very pleasant and very effective. I did work more closely with Eileen Sweeney who is one of the most marvellous and remarkable people that I've met and I have not met a more competent person in the role that she performs. A role which is vitally important and critical to all our work and which is greatly understated and unappreciated, not by the General Secretary, but by many of us who didn't realise her work and she is a very competent person and a very good person and we are very fortunate, very fortunate indeed in having Eileen Sweeney working for Congress on for the Irish Trade Union Movement and for Irish workers.

I want to thank the Chair of Standing Orders Michael Sharpe who I have admired from the distance for years actually and I have watched him steer so many Presidents through tortuous Congress debates and Congress Conferences and I would like to thank Michael for the assistance that he rendered onto me. People noted one or two technical errors on

my part over the last few days. When I come to do this again they won't recur. That's a joke by the way I won't be doing this again. But I want to thank Michael very much for his assistance to me during this Conference and indeed for all the work that he has done for Congress in his role as Chair of Standing Orders and I wish him well and I'm very sorry, very sorry to see him stepping down.

I want as well to say a word about the General Secretary of Congress and I want to say that we are most fortunate, most fortunate in having David Begg as our General Secretary. And I want to say that I know of no person, no person who will fill the role that he performs as General Secretary of our Congress as well as David Begg fulfils it. And I want to say as well that I do not know a person with anything like the same combination of intellectual depth and scope and rigour, combined with integrity to the degree that those characteristics are combined in the person that I know as David Begg. And it's interesting that his analysis which he outlined later in 2007 of the crisis and the way it was unfolding and what was required and the way in which the policy approach of the establishment would ultimately result in failure was much criticised and ridiculed and he stuck to his guns and of course he's been proven correct, so much so, that the only analysis that has stood the test of the last four years was the analysis that was put forward by David Begg and I hope he continues, notwithstanding calls earlier in the week to fulfil the role of General Secretary of our Congress for a very, very long time to come.

I want to thank you the Delegates who extended such courtesy and cooperation to me over this last few days and I want to thank all the people that you are representing here in your role as Delegates and I want now to pass the mantle to the outgoing Vice President and incoming President Eugene McGlone. Eugene is an experienced trade unionist of very many years standing who is a representative of the largest union organising in Northern Ireland and the second largest union organising on the Island. He is a man who has experienced all the difficulties of building trade union unity and power and organising workers in the most difficult circumstances that are experienced by trade union organisers anywhere in this Island and indeed perhaps anywhere in Europe. Eugene's union UNITE is a union in which my own union has developed very good, close, fraternal, cooperative relations over the past eight or nine years and I look forward to continuing cooperation. I look forward to Eugene's leadership and Presidency of our Congress and I want to assure him of my ongoing support for as long as I'm around so I want to introduce now the incoming President of Congress, to hand the mantle over to Eugene McGlone, Eugene.

Eugene McGlone, Incoming President

I didn't know who Jack was talking about there for a minute or two. By the way I've been told to wave up to my family upstairs because this is the last time your going to see me for a couple of years. So there's your wave and Kevin will have a photograph for you. By the way Jack if you had wanted another two years you only had to ask. I didn't think so.

Conference can I commence an address to you by saying that I want to wish all of you well for the next two years. I need your help certainly and I need everyone's help to carry out the task that's before us but I want to express first of all appreciation to my own union, UNITE for the honour of this election as President to Congress. I'm also deeply and humbly thankful to the other unions who nominated me and I want to assure you, everyone, that over the next two years that I will endeavour during my term of office to represent all

that is good and honourable in our movement and to live up to the expectations and the challenges the office calls for.

When Jack was elected as President it was his union SIPTU's as it was ASTI's Centenary year. By comparison UNITE, not its component parts, is still teething but that's something that will take time to develop. In taking up the office it's usual in becoming President to comment on a few issues and point on a direction that he or she hopes to take. But firstly I want to say a few words about Jack, I know it will help to embarrass him as David said. Following his election Jack often said that he had no real desire to be President, it was something that he reluctantly accepted and I suppose over the past two years he's had good reason to reflect upon that and I'm sure Jack you wish you hadn't have been so accommodating at times. He has been as goes with the territory, demonised and vilified in the worst possible fashion. So I'm sure it's a bit of a relief in that regard Jack that your term is over. One of the myths that went on about Jack during the course of his presidency was he presided over the collapse capitalism in Ireland, he would have loved to have done that but he didn't. I think Patricia saw the start of it and that the start of it she noted in her presidential address that Ireland had a quarter of a million people unemployed and that was a staggering figure, I think that's the way you mentioned it. It's now doubled that and that I think is the human scale of the difficulties of Jack's presidency and I think that that's the sort of burden that no man or woman should be faced with, but Jack faced that challenge.

Notwithstanding why he would personally be pleased to hand over this role. I think he can take some credit in the reflection that he carried out the tasks that were demanded of him with energy, with dignity and with resolve and I think we can also take some pleasure in that as well. What I'm tempted to say Jack is be careful what you don't wish for, you'll probably get it anyway. Though I would say that tongue in cheek because like yourself and all others who preceded us we want to try in our own small way to help develop the labour movement in Ireland and direct it towards a new paragon. We know that the people of Ireland deserve a labour movement that's fit for purpose, that's well able to defend people at work, defend their needs, defend their services in education and health, housing and all the other necessary elements that's going to make up our lives. That's why over the past two years Congress has called on workers and citizens to stand up and resist the destructive austerity measures. Many of you here today joined in the marches and protests, not only here in the Republic but also in Northern Ireland. With a British Tory Government aided by their friends and allies called a Liberal Democratic Party are visiting large doses of similarly unpalatable medicine on the ordinary working people throughout with a compliant administration at Stormont. And they are doing it for exactly the same reasons on purpose.

We know from our own common sense and from our own experiences of the past few years that if we allow the greedy bankers and the inept economists who through the years kept telling us that we never had it so good and who all the time were so callously running this country into bankruptcy. If we allowed them to dictate the way out of this crisis, then we have failed. Failed not only ourselves but failed miserably for our children and their children because we know damn well it will be at our expense not theirs. And I say this is no time for us to weaken our resolve, a time when our enemies are demonstrating the loyalty and the economic acumen of a Judas Iscariot, scrabbling about for a few extra bob to make up their sale or their soft landing fee that prescribe thirty pieces of bloody

silver, and they are doing this all the while the dole queues are getting longer and our young people are being cast adrift in the world, like a parody of some sort of Malthusian solution to our problems. It's time that we with all the force that we can muster said 'enough, no more', it's time for us the workers of this country who are the people who create the wealth to say that we'll take control of our destinies for ourselves. It's perhaps time we took a deep breath and only once again started to use the 'S' word for there's nothing short of the redistribution of wealth towards the have-nots instead of the constant pondering to the wealthy, the obscenely wealthy that will solve our problems. Strongly worded letters, well-meaning speeches and hand wringing won't get it done.

There are signs during the recent elections North and South, signs of changes and attitude and that these changes have already begun. It's the same sort of wake-up call that's been heard in Spain, being heard in Greece, being heard in Portugal and while it doesn't make us feel any better to learn that we're not alone in this imposed bankruptcy it must make us more determined to claw our way out of it on our terms. As a movement we said it quite clearly that the only feasible approach to impending crisis. We initially did it in the 10 Point Plan. Our proposals were and still are valid and while times and events have moved on since we published them so have we been constantly updating our approach.

The motions debated and passed yesterday and the details of the Report in Section One provide evidence that we got it right, as Jack said the analysis given by David at the outset has been proven totally accurate. Look at the title of Chapter Two, Section One of the Report, six words, Big Banks Bring Down The State. It tells us all we ever need to know about how we got into this situation. Firstly, International Banks recklessly lend to Irish Banks, they in turn recklessly lent to property speculators. The Government aided and abetted this by pump-priming the property sector through tax cuts by developer led land policies and while all the same time degrading banking regulations and then when the crisis finally hits us with full force instead of fixing the problem they set about making it worse. Pursuing totally irrational deflationary policies which did nothing other than to victimise workers through public spending cuts and tax increases. And then rather than to repair the broken banking system, accepting that the banks were broke they raided the savings of the country and threw billions that neither they nor we had into the sector. This left the State with a banking system that despite the billions that's been put into it, it's still incapable of contributing to economic growth and is now targeting the ordinary workers in the banks for the ever growing dole queues.

Every time this Government acted and the previous Government they managed to jump I would say rather adroitly, avoiding the frying pan, straight into the fire and the result is the country is now totally in hock to the EU/IMF bailout fund and it's unlikely to get out of that straight jacket any year soon and nobody asked us if we wanted to go there.

There is of course a solution, and this in part is a political solution. At our last Conference in Tralee we agreed a motion that's been referred to already to call for greater participation in the Irish Labour Party. This call wasn't merely an appeal for more membership for the Party, it was a logical and necessary encouragement for a labour movement to begin the act and joined up way, after all it was as Jack said organised labour which created the Party in 1912 to be a political expression of our social needs, to complement the industrial work that we unions normally carry out. It was to paraphrase Larkin 'your friend was having to fight with one hand behind their back'.

But we need to question has the Electorates confidence in returning the largest ever Labour presence to the Dail been best served by a Coalition with the most right wing political force in the State. I'd say the scenes are already there and it's not hard to see who's going to be blamed for the attack on workers' terms and conditions of employment. It won't be Fine Gael irrespective of how user friendly the Taoiseach was on Monday. They are after all the party of business. The signs are it's going to be the Labour Party.

Now unfortunately the motion passed in Tralee could only make a call in respect of the Republic of Ireland. In the North as I mentioned earlier today we don't have a party of Labour that we could mobilise in and perhaps now, perhaps in the coming months, in the next two years while it's not too late, it's time when we can encourage our members and their friends and their families to act and work for a party, a left of centre party of Labour for the North that can begin to fill the political aspirations and the needs of our members and our class. And a party which can create close links to both their British and Irish counterparts. This will not be an easy task. Comrades it will require great courage to do this against the terrible trends which still mark us out and which work against the interest of our members and the working people. It will be challenging the old tribal hagemonies. For unions it will mean putting your money where your mouth is and committing to this short vision.

If the attack on our class colleagues through the laughably termed 'spending cuts' is to be repelled then only we and our political allies can do it. So this is the challenge in that regard. Think about where we want to be in five, ten or fifteen years' time, in both jurisdictions and ask yourselves 'did I help cause this through my neglect, through my failure to act?'. Or will it will be a matter of us saying to ourselves 'this is something I helped to build and create'. I know what I want to be saying and it's for this reason that during the past two years we spent a considerable amount of time on the Commission that was established to review Congress. It's my view that the report and the Commission you endorsed is timely. It's an enabling report which now requires us to give it impetus, impetus that will equip the movement into the next generation to grow and influence and make real the promise of a better and fairer society.

And it's also timely because it comes at the end, some would say none too soon, of the great failed partnership experiment. David in his overview of the report comments that two years ago we were still hopeful of reaching an agreement with the employers and Government on a Social Solidarity Pact. Two years is a terribly long time isn't it and today our one time partners are plotting and planning to undermine minimum wage regulations we currently have and the Taoiseach emphasised that on Monday as well.

And maybe they whole experience was nothing more that a conjurers trick, all smoke and mirrors. For what we may ask have we achieved with twenty two years of being best friends with our social enemies and our political enemies and our class enemies? Where's the right for us to combine and collectively bargain with employers? Yes I'm aware that it's in the Programme for Government but that won't prevent us pursuing a legal route if necessary.

But maybe the one good thing that comes from the change of Government recently is that the current rule and party don't particularly care about us, they don't pretend otherwise,

despite what they may say. Because over the past few years they and their friends have been selling us and reselling us the same lies. Do you remember when the Electorate foolishly got the wrong result in the Lisbon Referendum? The Government decided 'well we'll just try again and then again perhaps if necessary until we get the right result'. And remember the posters that told us that to vote for Lisbon II was a vote for jobs? I wonder what happened to them? And I remember being told also that a vote for Lisbon II would mean that the social chapter would be put in place which would guarantee the right to organising a trade union. Where did that go? Now remember An Tánaiste in Tralee in 2009 when he promised, and this is what he promised, he gave us an explicit commitment to enshrine that fundamental right in Irish law should Lisbon II be ratified in October 2009. Yes of course we know that it's in the Programme for Government but that doesn't mean we're accepting anybody's word for it because unfortunately Labour isn't the Government, it's the minor partner in Government and the people who hold the Whip are the people who determine whether or not that will be realised during the course of this Government.

Conference if what I'm saying means anything at all, it means this that basically the only people we can rely upon are ourselves. We will and we must get back to basics. We must rely on our ability to lead and defend workers at the place of work, demonstrating that we are in business and it's our business and it's our usual business.

Conference over the last three days we've set a programme of work for the next two years. It will be a difficult time industrially, politically and organisationally. But I think we've overcome worse over the years and we will overcome our current trials and certainly I look forward to working with you in coming Executive Council for two years and the Vice Presidents, John Douglas and Patricia King and of course the Treasurer Joe Flynn and the staff of Congress to make the programme work.

I want to do one thing at the end, I want to thank you all for staying the course here because this has been a long three day session, it's been a long day today and at the heel of this I just want to mention a couple of people. Certainly the loss of Michael Sharpe is something that I'm going to regret. Jack says he's sorry to see him retiring, he's not as sorry as I am because I'm telling you that his expertise will be sorely missed in two years' time. But he's had a long innings and he's steered us well and we'll have to thank him for that, that he hasn't just been efficient and diligent but he's gracious as well.

We'll also lose for the next two years Peter McLoone, he's going to an early and well deserved retirement, well it's not that early I suppose Peter, but what will be missed will be Peter's careful and considered voice. Not a man I've known for a long time but he isn't rash, he thinks about things before he opens his mouth and that's a very, very valuable asset and that's a counsel that I know I'm going to miss over the next two years.

But I'm pleased to say that I'm still going to benefit from Jack having being elected. I'm sure that was a sweat for you Jack and Patricia also having been returned to the Executive Council so I've got the two last and past Presidents to rely upon. And while I'm mentioning that there have been a number of people over the last few days who have come up to me and told me that if I need any advice they would be only willing to give it to me, and I must wondering there's probably about forty people want to tell me what to do and I don't know when I'm going to get around to doing any of it.

But to conclude and thank you for the honour of having me as your President I want to quote, sort-quote from a man who I had some respect for, not all the time but some of the time and he's a recently deceased past President of Congress, John Freeman, a good comrade and he said when he was advising another good comrade of mine who was facing a very challenging situation that he was anxious about. He said be like Daniel fear nothing and that's what we must do thanks Comrades.

That concludes Conference thank you.

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