

**SPEECH PRESENTED TO THE PLENARY OF THE 108<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL  
LABOUR ORGANIZATION; BY MR. CHISHIMBA NKOLE, THE  
ZAMBIAN WORKERS DELEGATE**

**18<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2019**

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The Chairperson,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Zambian workers delegation I wish to convey my sincere appreciation for the opportunity to speak in this plenary session. Indeed this 108<sup>th</sup> Session of the International Labour Conference has covered a wide range of topics relating to the dynamics of the world of work.

I recognise that this is a special occasion to all of us as it is the year we celebrate ILO's 100 years of existence. This brings with it a new impetus to reinvigorate the founding principles of the ILO as we position ourselves to face the emerging challenges arising from the changing nature of work.

The report of the ILO Global Commission on the Future of Work is the point of departure as it details how to achieve a better future of work for all at a time of unprecedented change and exceptional

challenges in the world of work. We are glad that the report brings to light the need to pursue a human centred development agenda with emphasis, among other things, on lifelong learning, greater inclusivity, gender equality, and the role of universal social protection in a stable and just future of work.

It is true that none of this will happen by itself without decisive action. This calls for stronger partnerships at global level and institutional coherence with strengthened collaboration at national level to ensure greater inclusivity and equality.

The importance of attaining universal social protection needs to be emphasised especially in most developing countries in Africa and Zambia in particular where the majority of workers are confined in the informal economy.

In light of this, we wish to mention that currently Zambia is undergoing social protection reforms. However, we face a challenge at the design stage of our social protection schemes where the health insurance scheme, whose objective is to provide universal health coverage, does not meet the basic tenets of being an inclusive scheme in design and implementation.

The Ministry of Health under which the scheme was established excluded the most representative workers and employers' organizations from participating in the design and implementation stage of the scheme. Among other things, the scheme risks excluding the majority of workers especially workers in the informal economy.

While the Ministry of Labour agreed with the social partners to integrate the health insurance scheme into the broader social protection scheme to reduce on administrative costs, the Ministry of Health arrogantly undermined this tripartite consensus and established the scheme under the Ministry of Health without involvement of social partners and other key stakeholders.

In general, lessons from Zambia can show that the absence of institutional collaboration at national level can result in policy incoherence and exclusion and generally undermine the principle of tripartism.

Therefore, we call for stronger collaboration among development agencies at global level to ensure policy coherence and inclusion at national level. We also call for capacity building particularly towards achieving the UN Global Agenda 2030 for sustainable development, which is consistent with ILO's aspirations of establishing universal social protection floors at national level.

As we commemorate and celebrate ILO's 100 years of existence, we also envisage an ILO that is inclusive and democratic in design and practice. For this reason, we support the calls to restructure the Governing Body of the ILO to make it more inclusive and democratic.

Therefore, the ILO Centenary Declaration should take into account the need to ensure that in the next 100 years, ILO will endeavour to pursue equality by ensuring equal participation of member states in decision making as well as ensuring equal participation of men and women in all ILO structures.

As regards the work of the Committee on Ending Violence and Harassment at the place of work, we are glad to see that all tripartite constituents are resolved to formulate a Convention that would reflect the need to address the underlying causes of violence and harassment in workplaces notwithstanding our cultural and regional diversity.

In conclusion, we wish to underscore the need for capacity building for workers' organizations and indeed all ILO constituents in order to continuously align ourselves with the strategic objectives of the ILO. All in all, we reaffirm our commitment to the founding principles of the ILO as we adopt the Centenary Declaration.

We thank you

**Nkole Chishimba**

4<sup>th</sup> June 2018, ILO, Geneva

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