



International Labour Organization
Area Office Pretoria

Welcoming Remarks by
Mohammed Mwamadzingo,
Representing Ms Judica Amri-Makhetha, Director ILO Area Office for
South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland

during the Opening Ceremony of the Regional Workshop on "Youth
Employment and Urban Development: Employment Creation in Municipal
Services Delivery"

Birchwood Executive Hotel and Conference Centre
Johannesburg, South Africa
27-28 February 2006

- Distinguished policy makers and practitioners;
- Dear colleagues from various ILO Offices and from our sister UN agencies from Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania and Zimbabwe;
- Representatives of development partners here in South Africa (British, Swedish, Canadian, the Cities Alliance, UNDP);
- Invited Guests,
- Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is indeed an honour and pleasure to have this opportunity to officiate at the opening ceremony of this regional workshop on "Youth Employment and Urban Development: Employment Creation in Municipal Services Delivery".

At the outset, please accept a message of goodwill from Ms Regina Amadi-Njoku, the director of the Regional Office for Africa, based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Madam Njoku, in charge of all ILO activities in the African Continent, would have very much liked to be at this important workshop, but due to other pressing commitments has asked the ILO Office in Pretoria to represent the ILO Regional Office. In the same vein, please allow me to convey a special word of welcome from Ms Judica Amri-Makhetha, the director of the ILO Office in Pretoria, who was not

able to grace this occasion as she is currently out of the country, on leave. Madam Amri-Makhetha is not with us physically today, but she has closely followed up on the preparatory arrangements almost on daily basis. She fully supports and endorses this vital initiative of sharing lessons learned and better practices on substantive issues on the employment aspects of urban development.

Allow me this opportunity to welcome you all to this knowledge sharing workshop on Youth Employment Creation in Urban Municipal Service Delivery. This is a hot and timely topic here in South Africa where important municipal elections are being held this week on Wednesday 1 March.

As you all know, the ILO Office in Pretoria is responsible for ILO activities in the five Southern Africa Customs Union (SACU), namely South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland. We, therefore, feel very much privileged to play hosts to this workshop, which brings together policy makers and practitioners from Ghana, Tanzania, and South Africa. We are particularly pleased to be able to co-host this workshop together with South Africa's Expanded Public Works Programme and with the South African Cities Network.

At this critical stage of initiating our implementation planning for the current biennium 2006-07, we believe we can gain tremendously from the stated objectives of this workshop, which are stated as:

- (i) to share some lessons learned and better practices on substantive issues on the employment aspects of slum upgrading and urban development ;
- (ii) to disseminate the results of the slum upgrading study in South Africa, the waste collection management model in Tanzania, and the Decent Work Country Programme in Ghana; and
- (iii) develop future actions in the context of country programming and conceptual development.

We also feel advantaged to host this workshop because the subject matter forms one of the top notch priorities for our sub-region. If I may take the case of South Africa as an example, we have identified the first

Country Priority for the biennium 2006-07 as "creation of more and better quality jobs for young women and men in both the formal and "second economy". We hope the outcome of this priority shall be:

- Appropriate policies on employment intensive investment adopted by Government;
- Expanded Public Works Programme upscaled at the provincial level;
- Government adopts policy to enhance the development of the informal economy;
- National authorities promote local development initiatives which enhance employment creation for young women and men;
- Available Labour Market Information supports the development of policies and programmes for both the formal and informal economy.

As expected, these outcomes are meant to augment the clearly stated South Africa's growth strategy which is focussing on a massive five-year investment plan in energy, transport and infrastructure by attracting foreign investment and boosting economic growth. Infrastructure spending by Government and state-owned enterprises is expected to be around R400 billion in the next five years.

This agenda is driven and will be achieved through the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa (ASGISA). This initiative consists of a set of interventions that are intended to serve as catalysts to accelerated and shared growth and development.

The main objectives of ASGI-SA are to:

- reduce poverty and unemployment by fifty percent by the year 2014; and
- enable South Africa to achieve and sustain average economic growth rates of 4.5% between 2005 and 2009, and 6% between 2010 and 2014.

We believe this workshop will form an important step in a longer term vision being supported by the ILO of putting employment creation at the centre of economic and social policies. The focus of your discussions will be on how municipal and local governments can best deliver basic services and job opportunities to low-income groups. The prodding question is: Are these two objectives contradictory, or do they go hand in hand? In the

rush to quickly implement housing and other urban infrastructure programmes, is the goal of job creation central to our preoccupations, or does this objective fall by the wayside?

We in the ILO want to lend our strong endorsement to the recommendations of the Commission for Africa which state that infrastructure investments represent an enormous and largely untapped potential for job creation. The Commission has recommended major new injections of infrastructure investments to provide a foundation for sustainable economic growth in Africa. In the same vein, we take note of the African Union's NEPAD which identifies infrastructure as the focus in supporting the preparation and implementation of multi-country projects that are critical to Africa's competitiveness and economic integration.

We in the ILO are particularly interested in learning how we can better evaluate the impact of infrastructure investments on employment creation. By putting this information on employment impacts on the table, we are in a better position to subsequently work to optimize, and then monitor and evaluate these impacts.

Another challenge we are all facing is that of youth employment. A number of African leaders are putting youth employment at the top of their political agenda, not just as a development issue, but also as an imperative for national security. Following the visit of the UN Security Council to West Africa in 2004, the UN Office for West Africa has recently issued an important report on Youth Unemployment and Regional Security in West Africa. I hope this meeting will come up with practical recommendations on how local authorities and municipalities can deliver jobs for young people as a key for social and political stability as well as for economic development.

It is, thus, our intention to utilise the expertise and proposed modalities on the way forward that shall emerge from this workshop to augment our own outcomes vis-à-vis all the countries in our sub-region. Of course, we shall endeavour to share this vital information with the ILO Regional Office for Africa, as well as the other Area Offices whose countries are represented here, that is ILO Office in Abuja (in the case of Ghana) and ILO Office in Dar es Salaam (in the case of Tanzania).

Well, since we have quite a loaded agenda in front of us, it is not my intention to dwell so much on the technical side of things. I hereby wish to end my remarks by sincerely thanking all of you for coming to share with us your wide ranging experiencing.

A special word of thanks to the principal organisers of the workshop: Mr Steve Miller, Mr Tomas Strenstrom, Mr Dejene Sahle, and many of their colleagues who are not with us today. I also wish to express our appreciation to the co-ordination roles played by my colleagues from the ILO Office in Pretoria (Ms Cynthia Yinusa, the deputy director, MsTshepo Kau, and Ms Gladiola Radebe), who have worked hard to ensure a smooth take off of this workshop.

We want to thank the Government of the Netherlands for the financial support to the ILO which has made this meeting possible.

Once again, we are glad to say *mangwanani* to our colleagues coming from Zimbabwe, *karibuni* to our Kenya and Tanzania experts and *akwaaba* to our visitors from Ghana.

I thank you for your attention and wish you all fruitful deliberations.