

# **12<sup>th</sup> Regional Seminar on Labour-Intensive Practices 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> October 2007, Durban, South Africa**

## **Durban Statement**

### **Preamble**

The 12<sup>th</sup> Regional Seminar on Labour-Intensive Practices hosted by the Department of Public Works, Government of the Republic South Africa in cooperation with the International Labour Organisation, was held in Durban, South Africa from the 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> October 2007.

The bi-annual Regional Seminar offers African and other developing countries a forum to focus on measures to address the dual developmental challenges of employment creation and infrastructure investment that have been recognised as fundamental to reducing poverty, and on the opportunities presented by an employment-intensive and local resource-based approach to infrastructure investment.

To create a forum for dialogue between practitioners and policy makers, the host Government of South Africa invited Ministers of Public Works and Labour from the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). Ministers from Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe participated in the Regional Seminar, along with the Minister of Roads and Public Works from the previous Seminar host country Kenya.

The Ministers held a parallel Ministerial Meeting 9<sup>th</sup> October 2007 to critically review and discuss the potential of infrastructure and service delivery in creating decent productive employment opportunities, and its impact on poverty reduction, social cohesion and political stability. The Ministers present issued a Statement at the end of their Meeting in which they reaffirmed their commitment and support to optimize employment creation in the delivery of essential infrastructure and service delivery.

In view of drawing implementation strategies to the resolutions that emerged from the African Union (“AU”) Heads of States and Governments Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation, held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso in September 2004, the theme chosen for the 12<sup>th</sup> Regional Seminar for Labour Intensive Practice was “Prioritising Employment Creation in Government Policies and Investments in Infrastructure Programmes”.

The Seminar focused on three sub-themes:

1. Employment Impact Assessments;
2. Public Works Programmes and Social Transfers; and
3. Employment-focused Procurement and Private Sector Development.

450 delegates from 27 countries attended the five-day event. A total of 32 papers were presented and delegates visited selected South African Expanded Public Works Programme projects in and around Durban.

**Having** deliberated and critically analysed the potential of infrastructure investments, economic and environmental development programmes and social service delivery in creating decent productive employment opportunities for the unemployed, its impact in the reduction of poverty and contribution to social cohesion and political stability; and potential to promote gender equality;

**Taking** into account the guidance and commitment made by the participating Ministers to optimise the creation of decent productive employment in infrastructure investment as expressed in their statement;

**WE**, the Delegates of the 12<sup>th</sup> Regional Seminar on Labour-Intensive Practices held 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> October 2007 in Durban, South Africa;

**Recalling** the commitments made by the African Heads of States and Governments at their third Extraordinary Session on Employment and Poverty Alleviation held 8<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> September 2004 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso<sup>1</sup>;

**Recalling** the global commitment made under the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to half extreme poverty by 2015;

**Concerned** that unemployment and underemployment in Sub-Saharan Africa is the highest in the world and is threatening the development of our respective countries and the region in general;

**Recognizing** that equal access to employment is a basic human right and gives dignity to individuals and communities, and that it is key to social cohesion, economic and political stability;

**Recognizing** the increased allocation of resources to infrastructure by both governments and development partners and its potential on creating increased employment opportunities;

**Having explored** possibilities of expanding employment-intensive approaches into new sectors such social, economic and environmental services;

**Having deliberated** on the opportunities, strategies and approaches to optimise employment creation in government policies and investment in infrastructure programmes;

**Recognising** the need for employment impact assessments so as to increase employment and the impact on poverty reduction of public sector investments;

**Having examined** different employment guarantee models and social transfer schemes as a means to restore dignity, provide a safety net and means to sustainable livelihoods;

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<sup>1</sup> Declaration on Poverty and Employment. Assembly of the Africa Union Third Extraordinary Session on Employment and Poverty Alleviation 8-9 September 2004, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

**Reiterating** the need for target group participation in the full cycle of asset creation; operation and maintenance of assets and service delivery;

**Recognising** the essential role of the private sector in the planning, delivery and operation of infrastructure assets and service delivery;

**Reflecting** on the resolution from the 11<sup>th</sup> Regional Seminar held in Mombasa, Kenya, in October 2005 and appreciating the effort and achievements made regionally in making infrastructure and service delivery employment friendly;.

## **Hereby resolve to**

**Support** the development of coherent policy and institutional frameworks that support employment-intensive investments;

**Operationalise** government employment and infrastructure policies and programmes towards employment creation and poverty reduction;

**Develop and apply** tools and methodologies for employment impact assessments to support the increased allocation of resources in investment plans and budgets, including recurrent and capital budget, to interventions that have high potential for the creation of employment opportunities;

**Mainstream** employment in infrastructure investment through appropriate planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation tools to ensure the employment creation potential is optimised in infrastructure and service delivery in a cost effective and sustainable manner;

**Optimize** the creation of decent employment<sup>2</sup> and its impact on poverty reduction through the further development and application of employment-intensive approaches and programmes across different sectors including social, economic and environmental without compromising cost and quality of assets;

**Engage** target groups: communities, youth, women, persons with disabilities and others through their participation in identification, planning, designing and implementation of infrastructure and services that will have high impact on improving their lives;

**Facilitate** the participation of emerging local entrepreneurs that promote the use of local resources and employment creation through the provision of access to skills, resources and work;

**Develop and apply** monitoring mechanisms that measure, benchmark, evaluate and document the achievements and impact made in creating employment opportunities,

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<sup>2</sup> "Decent work has been defined by the ILO and endorsed by the international community as being productive work for women and men in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. Decent work involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income; provides security in the workplace and social protection for workers and their families; offers better prospects for personal development and encourages social integration; gives people the freedom to express their concerns, to organize and to participate in decisions that affect their lives; and guarantees equal opportunities and equal treatment for all."

skills development and business opportunities using investments made in infrastructure and service;

**Engage** academic and vocational training institutions to include labour-intensive approaches in their curricula;

**Document** the lessons learned and best practices for sharing among practitioners, policy makers, learning and research institutions and continue to share knowledge and experience amongst ourselves and other interested groups using various forums;

**Develop** strategies and actions plans to operationalise the resolutions made herein as well as follow-up mechanisms to monitor their implementation and to report back to the next Regional Seminar;

**Call upon** Delegates to become focal points in their respective countries to champion employment intensive approaches;

**Seek to** broaden the participation of Ministers in future seminars;

**Reaffirm** the call made by the Ministers' Meeting that ILO should continue to provide technical advisory support on the harmonization of approaches on optimizing the employment potential of public investment in infrastructure and to strengthen knowledge management and sharing for increased and efficient application of employment-intensive approaches, and on linking up with the African Employment Forum and others.

12<sup>th</sup> October 2007

Durban, South Africa