

LABOUR DAY CELEBRATION, 1ST MAY 2009
**THEME: “ECONOMIC RECOVERY THROUGH RESPECT FOR WORKERS’ RIGHTS,
GOOD GOVERNANCE AND JOB SECURITY”**
**REMARKS BY INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION (ILO) REPRESENTATIVE
FOR MALAWI, MOZAMBIQUE AND ZAMBIA, MR. GERRY FINNEGAN**

It is a great honour and privilege for me to make these remarks on, today, Labour Day, 01 May 2009, under the theme “Economic recovery through respect for workers’ rights, good governance and job security”. On 28th April 2009, the ILO celebrated its 90th anniversary, and we believe that the ILO’s mandate and message on social justice and employment is as relevant today as it was back in 1919.

Today, Zambia and indeed the entire world, is experiencing an unprecedented financial and economic crisis, which is now being evidenced in labour markets with the loss of workers’ jobs and with threats to workers’ rights and job security.

Thus, it is timely and appropriate to include “economic recovery” in today’s theme. It is well documented by now that the lack of “good governance” in financial markets was the major contributory factor to the onset of the global financial crisis. Good governance therefore is vitally important in the reconstruction, recovery and reform of financial, economic & labour markets.

The ILO, as the UN’s specialized agency dealing with employment and labour issues, is a uniquely tripartite organization. It has at its core the representation of governments, employers and workers from among its 182 member states, and this surely contributes to “good governance” within the ILO itself.

In the context of Zambia, the important issues relating to this year’s May Day theme cannot be undertaken solely by any one party. Rather they are the joint responsibility of all of the tripartite partners, and should be implemented in the framework of the Tripartite Consultative Labour Council, which had its first meeting of 2009 just one week ago.

For Zambia, the relevant policy and regulatory frameworks already exist. These are:

- I. Vision 2030, in which Zambia aspires to become a middle income country by 2030;
- II. Fifth National Development Plan, and its chapter on Employment and Labour;
- III. The National Employment and Labour Market Policy;
- IV. The Zambia Decent Work Country Programme, launched in December 2007 by the then Vice President, now H.E. Rupiah Banda, Republican President.

Your honour, in relation to the **key role of the government**, I would suggest the following important steps that should contribute to a better, safer and more secure working environment:

1. The rigorous **implementation of existing laws and policies**, particularly in relation to (a) inspection of Zambia's workplaces to ensure compliance and elimination of workplace abuses; (b) systematic implementation of the Employment Policy, with an action plan and appropriate outputs and indicators; (c) amendments to the Industrial and Labour Relations Act (2008) in full compliance with those International Labour Conventions already ratified by Zambia.
2. **Finalization of important items of "work in progress"**, for which Government has already carried out much of the valuable and important background work. This includes: (a) the finalizing the draft Employment Bill, to be undertaken in association with the Tripartite Consultative Labour Council (TCLC) and in line with ratified International Labour Conventions; (b) in order to rid Zambia of the scourge of Child Labour, adopting the draft Child Labour Policy; finalizing the National Action Plan on Child Labour, and producing the Statutory Instrument to designate "Hazardous Forms of Child Labour"; (c) addressing outstanding issues relating to the application of ratified International Labour Standards in accordance with the comments of ILO's Committee of Experts.
3. **Ratification of additional Labour Standards** that help to bolster Zambia's legal and regulatory framework on employment and labour, in areas such as occupational safety and health, maternity protection, etc.
4. In response to the **impacts of the global financial crisis** on Zambian workers: (a) giving an enhanced role with additional resources to the TCLC; (b) creating a Task Force to quantify impacts on workers and their families (with TCLC, CSO, other key line ministries); (c) developing measures to cushion and mitigate the harsh impacts on Zambian workers and their families; (d) promoting new job creation opportunities and new sectors, such as "Green Jobs".
5. Ensure a **comprehensive and inclusive approach** in the government's responses and programmes relating to the global crisis. Mobilizing and engaging all key actors in the labour market, including Ministry of Labour, employers' and workers' organizations, and the UN system (incl. ILO), particularly in private sector development, and follow-up actions to the recent indaba.

For **organizations of Zambian workers and employers**, it is important that they create greater awareness among their members about the causes, impacts and responses to the crisis, and they play a full role in designing and implementing national and sectoral responses. The ILO will continue its support for the employers' and workers' organizations.

For the **International Labour Organization (ILO)**, as the UN's supporting partner in this context, the ILO will ensure the following:

- i. Give greater emphasis in all existing and new ILO activities to specifically provide practical responses to the impacts of the financial crisis on Zambian workers. This includes ILO's child labour activities; support for gender equality, women workers and women entrepreneurs; inputs on social protection and social security; actions on HIV & AIDS in the workplace; and in the context of "Delivering as One UN in Zambia", through its work on Economic Empowerment through MSME development.
- ii. ILO will maximize its partnerships within the UN system, with cooperating partners and civil society to bring more support and resources to the badly-affected labour market. In addition to the above-mentioned, the ILO as a member of the United Nations Country Team for Zambia, is working on "Delivering as One UN" to have greater engagement of various UN agencies around key employment and labour issues, such as child labour, HIV & AIDS, trafficking and forced labour, gender equality, and disability issues.
- iii. ILO will provide further capacity building support for national organizations of workers and employers to enable them to engage fully in responses to the crisis.
- iv. The ILO Director-General, Mr Juan Somavia, has placed our organization on "crisis footing" in response to the global jobs crisis. The ILO will launch a "Global Jobs Pact" at the planned Summit on the Global Jobs Crisis in Geneva on 15-16 June 2009.
The ILO Lusaka Office will also provide timely guidance and advice to its tripartite constituents in the form of a Decent Work response on key employment-related matters.

Your Honour, to conclude, a healthy, safe workplace which promotes decent work, respects workers' rights and provides adequate job security will contribute to a happy, motivated and productive work force. And this should be a key ingredient in economic recovery for Zambia.

I thank you all for your attention.