

**Closing Statement by Mr Gerry Finnegan, ILO Representative for
Malawi, Mozambique & Zambia - "Gender, HIV & AIDS and the Media in
promoting Agricultural Enterprises"
ZAMCOM Complex, 7 March 2008**

I wish to congratulate you all for having completed the course on the role and importance of Gender, HIV and AIDS and the Media in promoting agricultural enterprises. This is a highly topical issue, as this week sees "International Women's Week" and tomorrow is International Women's Day, 8 March 2008.

On 5-6 March, Bank of Zambia organized an exhibition of Financial Institutions at MICC around the global theme of Financing for Gender Equality. This was an important, milestone event, and it was highly significant that Bank of Zambia showed great leadership in organizing this event. It placed a focus on inclusive financing, particularly in enhancing women's access to finance, and it gave emphasis to financing for rural communities, including to small-scale agricultural enterprises.

The ILO in association with the UN System in Zambia has a continuing commitment to ensuring that Zambia achieves what is planned under the FNDP, that it strives to achieve the MDGs, and that it moves towards becoming a middle-income country by 2030.

The ILO does so within the framework of the Zambia Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP), which contributes to implementing the National Employment and Labour Market Policy (NELMP), and in turn to achieving what is laid out in the Employment and Labour Chapter on the FNDP.

The three major priorities of the DWCP are:

- Job creation for women, young people, and people with disabilities
- Prevention and mitigation of HIV & AIDS in the workplace
- Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL)

The ILO cannot and should not operate alone. The ILO is a unique "tripartite organization" comprised of constituents from Government (MLSS +++), workers' organizations (e.g. ZCTU) and employers' organizations (ZFE). This provides an excellent platform for building/consolidating partnerships at the national level.

As the specialized UN agency on employment and labour matters, ILO works increasingly within the framework of the UN "Delivering as One" in Zambia. To demonstrate this point, ILO is taking the lead on behalf of the UN System in Zambia on a project entitled "Broad-based Wealth and Job Creation – Economic Empowerment through MSME Development". This involves ILO leading and partnering with UNDP, UNCTAD and Global Compact – to start with, and other UN Agencies eager to join this ILO-led consortium, for the benefit of Zambia ...

The ILO also values its partnerships with the media.

Recognizing that according to the 2005 LFS, some 88% of the working population are in the Informal Economy, and many of these are in the rural areas engaged in small-scale and subsistence farming and agriculture, the ILO places importance on assisting those engaged and working in the informal sector, and especially enterprises being run by women and people with disabilities. This involves the ILO in assisting women in starting and developing their own businesses and their own income-generating ideas, particularly through the Women's Entrepreneurship Development and Gender Equality (WEDGE) Programme.

The ILO wants these businesses to be successful, but in order to achieve this we also need to understand the significant impacts and barriers that arise from gender-based inequalities and from the disproportionate effects that HIV and AIDS have on women and their enterprises.

The ILO also supports gender equality, including the promotion of four (4) International Labour Conventions relating to equality and inclusiveness:

- Discrimination
- Equal Pay
- Maternity Protection
- Workers with Family Responsibilities

In association with the UN System and the Cooperating Partners in Zambia, ILO is working closely with GIDD and MoWGID to finalize a new Gender Support Programme, hopefully to be launched during this month.

The ILO has a Code of Practice on HIV & AIDS in the World of Work, and you should be familiar with that Code. Recognizing that the large majority of workers are in the Informal Economy, the ILO is involved in helping workplaces – including informal workplaces - respond to the impact of HIV and AIDS.

I stress that Gender and HIV and AIDS initiatives should not be treated as one-off or stand-alone activities, but they need to be mainstreamed into ongoing organizational initiatives. As an example, in the DWCP, as I have mentioned, Job Creation "for Women" and "HIV & AIDS" are priorities. But in addition, both Gender and HIV & AIDS issues are mainstreamed throughout the DWCP and its implementation.

You all know the expression, "There's no such thing as a 'free lunch' ". Well, by now you are all well aware of the expectations that the ILO has of you, resulting

from this training and from the parallel support that the ILO is providing to many of your organizations. It is agreed that:

a. the media institutions will soon run HIV and AIDS programmes at the district level, and they will also ensure that gender issues are covered adequately

b. the media institutions will continue to work with the ILO BDS project in the planned missions, and as a result of the planned missions (Eastern and Copperbelt/Solwezi) will produce/broadcast stories and feature articles that promote a developmental message – not an “ILO message” – and demonstrate and understanding and sensitivity towards the key issues covered during the training: those relating to Gender and HIV & AIDS.

I believe that we are all partners in development. We all have our jobs to do – but it can be so much more effective if we collaborate, work together and assist each other. The tasks are formidable, the resources are few. Finally, may I take this opportunity of wishing all who travelled from outside Lusaka a safe trip back to their duty stations.

I now have the privilege of presenting you with course certificates.