

**Remarks by Martin Clemensson, Director
ILO Country Office for Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique
Labour Day 2011**

HE the President, Rupiah Banda
Minister of Labour and Social Security, Hon. Austin Liato
President of Zambia Congress of Trade Unions, Mr Leonard
Hikaumba
President of the Zambia Federation of Employers, Mr Alfred
Masupha
Cabinet Ministers and Deputy Ministers
Senior Government Officials
Workers of Zambia
Our friends from the media
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On the occasion of Labour Day 2011, the International Labour Organization's Office for Zambia, sends greetings and congratulations to all workers and all trade unions in the Republic of Zambia.

We also extend greetings to the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, and to the Zambia Federation of Employers, who together with the trade union movement, make up the tripartite social partners in Zambia and who are the members of the International Labour Organization.

The celebration of the Labour Day has existed in the world since 1872. At that time, workers were demonstrating to show solidarity with those who dared to propose that the working hours should be reduced from 12 to 9 per day. Today, the fight in Zambia is more about the right to work at all.

This year's theme is "Creating Secure Employment with Freedom, Equity and Human Dignity". That is a noble theme and aspiration,

and it is also the definition of Decent Work. Decent Work can also be described as more and better jobs, or the quantity and quality of work.

So how is Zambia doing, with regard to Decent Work? It is a mixed picture: in terms of quantity, 10-12 % of the labour force is in the formal sector, ie they have real employment with contracts. These lucky few have regular incomes, reasonable working conditions, some social protection and are represented by the trade unions.

But about 90% of the labour force in Zambia is in the informal economy, where the quality of work is poor: they have no social protection, no regular income, no voice and are not benefitting from the country's economic growth.

Given the recent events in North Africa and the Middle East, it is absolutely essential to connect people's aspirations, especially young people's aspirations, to productive solutions. Having 90% of the labour force unemployed or in the informal economy is taking a risk.

We cannot expect that productivity will come from vulnerability. Zambia cannot ground its future development on people's vulnerability.

Today, the main question is not whether we can afford a social protection floor for all, but whether Zambia can afford not to invest in social protection.

So, the theme of this year's Labour Day is indeed at the heart of what is needed in Zambia: more employment and more sustainable enterprises, rights at work, social protection and occupational safety and health, and social dialogue.

These important basic elements will be the founding principles for Zambia's next Decent Work Country Programme that the three partners will develop this year with the ILO. A Decent Work Country Programme is a plan for how the trade unions, employers and

Ministry of Labour and Social Security, will make a significant contribution to the SNDP during 2012-15.

Zambia has had a spectacular economic growth of about 6-7 % per year. Unfortunately, that has not translated into more jobs and less poverty. An important reason for that is that much of the growth takes place in one sector only – the mining sector - thanks to booming copper prices. We must also invest in other sectors like tourism, construction, agriculture productivity and small enterprise development, and we must invest in education and skills.

As the economy grows by 6-7 %, the employment should grow with 6-7 % and the poverty should reduce by 6-7 %.

In other words, economic growth and Decent Work should go hand in hand. We must not have one without the other.

There is no solution to poverty without sustainable, productive and reasonably paid jobs.

What we have learnt since the ILO was created in 1919, is that an active, frequent and frank dialogue between the partners on the labour market, ie the workers, the employers and the Government, is the most effective way to achieve progress and sustainable prosperity.

For that reason, it is most essential that the three partners have strong voices, that they genuinely represent their members' interests and that they have mechanisms for an active social dialogue.

Trade unions have a proud history in Zambia.

Today, the working people need the strong voice of the trade union movement more than ever to speak up and represent them - and to stand united.

Today, the working people also need to know exactly where the political contenders stand, with regard to what matters most: jobs, incomes, rights, protection, influence and dignity.

We wish you well in celebrating Labour Day 2011!

I thank you for your attention.