

**Remarks made by Martin Clemensson, Director for the ILO Country Office for  
Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique**

**on the occasion of the ZCTU General Council Meeting, 12<sup>th</sup> August 2011**

The Secretary to the Cabinet, Mr Joshua Kanganja

The President of ZCTU, Leonard Hikaumba

The ZCTU Secretary General, Mr Roy Mwaba

Representative of the Zambia Federation of Employers

Representative of the Federation of Free Trade Unions in Zambia FFTUZ

Resident Representative of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Mr Naumann

Representative of LO/Norway

ZCTU General Council members

Honoured guests, colleagues, ladies and gentleman — good morning

I am very grateful for the opportunity to address you today in this meeting of ZCTU general council members and invited guests. The discussions of this General Council meeting are important as they address a number of key organisational issues.

Let me begin by referring to the current global context which is currently characterised by the protracted financial, economic and social crisis. Events across the world keep reminding us of the consequences when duty bearers do not connect people's aspirations to productive solutions. Large unemployment and underemployment, and a sense of exclusion, particularly among young

people, is not healthy for a country's cohesion and stability. If not adequately and comprehensively addressed, a social crisis with potential instability may loom. The situation offers an opportunity for concerted action by Governments and social partners to lead the way.

The initiative of the Labour Movement to call for the Indaba in March this year, re-affirmed its commitment to addressing the challenges of the nation in addition to reviewing its own organizational challenges. This reflects the relevance and importance of the Labour Movement in Zambia in shaping social and economic policy, particularly when it was noted that the Labour Movement needed to reshape its focus and atune itself to the changing environment. This is given the long history that the Labour Movement in Zambia has, of shaping Zambia's democracy and liberalisation efforts.

This brings me to a crucial event that Zambia will be witnessing in the coming weeks and that event speaks to the theme of this general council meeting, i.e. Social Transformation with Security!

Decent work is at the heart of people's lives and expectations. No election can be won without employment promises – and no re-election is possible without delivering employment.

However, there is need to lay emphasis on the fact that in order for the labour force to be productive, vulnerabilities need to be reduced by generating the necessary decent jobs and having a reasonable social protection floor. Employment alone without decent working conditions is not enough. The jobs

must enable workers to exercise their rights at work, and jobs should have the necessary social security benefits for them to be considered as decent, and overall, social dialogue is necessary to ensure a harmonious and productive workforce. At the same time, enterprises must be competitive to be able to grow and create more jobs, so the policy environment needs to be enabling and the workforce needs to have the needed skills.

Therefore, employment creation and decent work, which the labour movement ascribes to, becomes an important political thematic area. The role of the Labour Movement within the context of the social dialogue, i.e. the Tripartite Consultative Labour Council, needs to be more clearly articulated. The TCLC shouldn't only be about amendments to the labour legislation. It is a forum to advise the Government on social and economic policy and it is important that the Labour Movement's voice is clearly heard there.

This is particularly so when it comes to shaping the strategies for reaching the targets on employment in the Sixth National Development Plan.

The ILO and its tripartite constituents will continue to echo the fact that there can be no solution to poverty without the creation of sustainable, meaningful and adequately remunerated jobs – in both private and public sectors – both in the formal and informal economies.

Recognizing the presence of the Secretary to the Cabinet, Mr. Joshua Kanganja, I think this is an appropriate occasion to announce that the tripartite constituents in Zambia have started the elaboration of the next Decent Work Country Programme, which will contribute to the SNDP. It is the expectation of the tripartite constituents that the next DWCP for Zambia will be endorsed by

Cabinet as a key policy document and strategy for stimulating decent job creation in various sectors of the economy, especially, but not limited to, those sectors defined in the SNDP as key drivers and enablers for economic growth.

The activities undertaken by the Trade Union movement as earlier mentioned are particularly relevant, as the country continues to record good economic growth rates characterised by an inflow of foreign direct investments. Continued projections of over 6% growth are impressive and this coupled with the country's recent reclassification of a "lower" middle income country by the World Bank poses a number of questions with regards to the distribution of these economic gains to the people of Zambia, and the workers, in particular.

No doubt will it be essential that people benefit from the country's economic fortunes, and that broad-based investments in education and skills upgrading are made – also to enable a diversification of the economy.

There will be much to consider during this General Councillors Meeting, so on behalf of the ILO, I wish you much success with your deliberations.

Thank you