

17th Regional Seminar of Labour-Based Practitioners

Theme: "Achieving Sustainable Development Goal, the Employment Intensive Approach"

13-17 November 2017, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Ministerial Declaration

1. We, the Ministers and country representatives from Benin, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Madagascar, Nepal, South Africa, Tunisia and Uganda responsible for Transport; Public Works, Development and International Cooperation; Economy and Planning; investments and international cooperation, Roads and Highways; and Local Development.
2. Meeting at the Ministerial session on 13 and 14 November 2017 at the African Union Nelson Mandela Hall in Addis Ababa, as part of the 17th Regional Seminar of Labour-based Practitioners officiated by His Excellency Demeke Mekonnen, Deputy Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and presided by His Excellency Ahmed Shide, Minister of Transport of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia;
3. Recognizing the growing interest on employment-intensive investment (EII) approaches and diversification of its application in different sectors with multiple actors;
4. Noting that despite the significant economic growth in many African countries the pressure on natural resources and on the labour market, the insufficient infrastructure and socio-economic facilities, youth unemployment, weak coverage of social protection and the in-flux migration continue to be major concerns for African countries and call for urgent and concerted measures to help ensure social cohesion, water, food and income security;
5. Noting that national governments have committed to all Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), and recognizing that EII approaches address most of the root causes for sustainability and development;
6. Recognizing the need for the promotion of the Decent Work Agenda to improve working conditions, employability, strengthen social dialogue, and fostering public-private and public-community partnerships to improve employment outcomes for the poorest and vulnerable communities, as well as increased participation of SMEs and emerging entrepreneurs - all in the spirit of social and solidarity economy;

7. Accepting that in the spirit of “Leaving no one behind” stronger action is needed at local level to strengthen the decentralization processes including devolution. Further observing that decentralization and the sustainable development agenda offer conditions to generate more opportunities for decent employment, explore or optimize the use of local resources and expertise as well as strengthening the skills of local businesses;
8. Considering the development of quality infrastructure, youth employment, social protection, climate change adaptation and effective management of migration are major priorities for the African region, and the need to address the root causes of inequalities and the creation of wealth;
9. Recognizing that efforts are still required to efficiently monitor and assess the impact of employment-intensive investment programmes and the need to identify and agree on measurable indicators to achieve and report on the SDGs and the AU Agenda 2063.

We therefore commit to:

10. Realign employment programmes, including infrastructure, with SDGs and the AU agenda 2063 as well as develop a sustainable funding mechanism through national investment budgets, private sector and civil society funding, complemented by the contribution of development partners;
11. Encourage national and regional dialogue and adapt our policies to enhance resilience through community participation in order to mitigate the negative impacts of and adapt to climate change and advocate for a just transition through employment policies and programmes which promote employment-intensive investment, green and decent jobs;
12. Institutionalize and strengthen the EII approach through high level national inter-sectoral coordination structures and implement integrated multi-sectoral employment programmes, consistent with national development and sectoral priorities that generate employment, income security, create and maintain quality assets and facilitate the achievement of the SDGs;
13. Strengthen the capacity of local actors and institutions and ownership of employment programmes through vocational and managerial skills training, the enhancement of the participation of local communities in project delivery, including social audits by the beneficiaries;

14. Adopt transparent and inclusive procurement policies and procedures, to promote SMEs' involved in employment intensive works to have access to public resources, and enhance participation of communities in project delivery;
15. Adopt guidelines and codes of conduct of labour-based programmes in consultation with the social partners; particularly with regard to working conditions including, but not limited to, minimum wage, working age, equal pay, safety and health at the workplace, and respect for gender equity and equality;
16. Increase the participation of youth and women in EII programmes in decision-making and delivery of works and services; including gender-sensitive care facilities;
17. Improve the collection and processing of relevant data to analyse employment impact of investment strategies and programmes, policy and technology options, as well as to ascertain the level of achievement of the SDGs and the AU Agenda 2063;
18. In the spirit of South-South cooperation and international solidarity, provide regular updates of national achievements and best practices at the Regional Seminars for Labour-based Practitioners.

Solicit that:

19. The ILO supports decent job creation initiatives included in the Decent Work Country Programmes and the UN Development Assistance Framework in order to achieve sustainable development objectives and the AU agenda 2063;
20. The ILO to support the formulation of EII strategies that are aligned to the national priorities and SDGs.
21. The ILO supports local capacity building initiatives relating to programme planning and development, building vocational training capacity, establishing appropriate monitoring and evaluation systems;
22. Countries that are engaged in labour-based programmes, implement and encourage the provision of regular reports and updates under the platform of the Regional Seminars and in other global events; also for the benefit of those not participating in the regional seminar;

23. Countries, Regional Economic Communities, the African Union and Regional Development Banks to support the financing of employment-intensive investment projects that respond to national and local needs, addressing the root causes of protracted crises, and improving the coherence between humanitarian assistance and development, within the framework of the SDGs, AU Agenda 2063, Ouagadougou +10 on employment and the Paris Climate Agreement.

We Appreciate:

24. The States whose efforts are consistent with the EII approach which have significant economic, social, and environmental impact, have shared good practices on committing local resources; for instance, good practices reported South Africa ring-fenced 30% of public procurement for youth entrepreneurs, Tunisia 20% for SMEs,

25. The ILO for the multifaceted support provided to countries for the promotion and supporting application of EII approaches and to monitor commitments arising from this edition of the Regional Seminar of Labour-based Practitioners;

26. The Government of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Organizing Committee for the successful organization of the 17th Regional Seminar for Labour-based Practitioners and urge all participants of the Seminar to bring the contents of this Ministerial Declaration and the Declaration of the Participants to their respective Governments and work towards its implementation;

Vote of Thanks to:

27. Thank the Deputy Prime Minister, His Excellency, Demeke Mekonnen, the Minister of Transport, His Excellency Ahmed Shide, the government and the people of Ethiopia for hosting, the warm welcome and the effective execution of this 17th Regional Seminar for Labour-based Practitioners.

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 14 November, 2017