
**COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF ZIMBABWE ON YOUTH
EMPLOYMENT, 29 MARCH 2012**

We, the young people of Zimbabwe meeting under the auspices of the Zimbabwe National Youth Employment Conference: *Building a future with Decent Work for Young People*, meeting at the Rainbow Towers Hotel, Harare on the 29th of March 2012 to reflect on the status of youth employment in Zimbabwe:

Taking note of the statements made by the Government of Zimbabwe through the Ministry of Youth Development, Indigenization and Empowerment (MoYDIE), Employers' Confederation of Zimbabwe (EMCOZ), Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and the National Association of Non- Governmental Organizations (NANGO), Universities in Zimbabwe (University of Zimbabwe and others) and the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) represented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Labour Organization (ILO);

Having,

- Discussed and analysed the status of youth employment in Zimbabwe;
- Explored the challenges associated with youth unemployment in the context of the prevailing national economic context;
- Drawn from technical research inputs and presentations made;
- Shared experiences on the impact of youth unemployment from our varied backgrounds; and
- Deliberated on the way forward as informed by our experiences and 'best practices' from the country and beyond.

Observing the serious and worsening youth unemployment in Zimbabwe, especially in the context of the global recession and noting that Zimbabwe is experiencing jobless growth (capacity utilisation grew by 14% and yet in excess of 5,000 people lost their jobs), among all the categories of the labour force in Zimbabwe the youth have the highest unemployment rate. Youths aged 15-24 years constituted the bulk of the unemployed, accounting for 62.1% in 1994, 65% in 1999, 67.5% in 2002 and 59.6% in 2004. According to the 2002 Population Census results, youth constituted 67.5% of the total unemployed population;

Further observing that the formal economy is shrinking and only available form of employment for the youth is in the informally sector, where the youth are subjected to low quality jobs with low returns, long hours of work, limited personal and job security, zero social protection, and high level of decent work deficits;

Noting that the education and training systems are ill-designed to satisfy the human resources requirements of the economy (both formal and non-formal), thus it is supply biased (academically inclined);

Further noting that the technical and vocational institutions are operating below capacity due to dilapidated equipment and lack of funding;

Concerned about the great potential and energy within the youth, currently laying dormant;

Further concerned about the absence of a comprehensive national social security system in Zimbabwe and the inadequacy of the fragmented interventions in this sector;

Worried about the effects of high youth unemployment include youth engaging into drug abuse, violence and crime, promiscuity leading to prostitution where they end up contracting HIV and AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections that can be detrimental to their health;

Further worried about the fact that the current youth unemployment situation is not only an economic issue but also a social, political, (security), human rights and developmental issue that calls for an increased attention and decent work policy measures by government;

Realising the absence of accurate data disaggregated by gender, disability, and rural versus urban area on youth employment, unemployment and underemployment to facilitate prioritization of issues in development programmes;

Further realising the lack of a comprehensive coordinated approach towards youth employment and developmental challenges;

Cognisant of the need to achieve consensus and develop a common vision on matters involving youth employment and development by all key stakeholders;

Encouraged by the work the Ministry of Youth Development, Indigenisation and Empowerment is doing under its various programmes and initiatives;

Further encouraged by the adoption by Cabinet, of the National Employment Policy framework in June 2010;

Mindful of the need to learn and draw lessons from emerging 'best practices' from the region and beyond; and

Further mindful of the emerging consensus on the need to integrate social and economic policies to achieve a holistic, integrated and balanced approach to Sustainable Human Development;

Hereby recommend:

- ✓ The finalisation of a National Youth Policy for Zimbabwe by all key stakeholders in line with the inputs from the National Youth Employment Conference;
- ✓ There is need for a multi-sectoral approach and the involvement of all relevant ministries working on the youth, labour and employment issues to create synergies in attacking unemployment;
- ✓ There is need for the establishment and strengthening of entrepreneurship education in schools and tertiary institutions to foster the development of an entrepreneurial culture among the youth to facilitate self-employment;
- ✓ There is need for wide dissemination of the skills requirements of the economy through career guidance and counselling sessions so that students make informed decisions;
- ✓ A co-ordinated Labour Market Information System needs to be established to monitor labour market trends and facilitate the designing, planning and monitoring of policies and programmes geared at employment generation;
- ✓ Government and social partners should develop a comprehensive social protection for the youth;

- ✓ The establishment of a youth development fund supported by both the private sector and the government (through national budget allocation);
- ✓ Establishment of Local Economic Development Initiatives for the youth (harnessing the potential growth within local communities);
- ✓ Promotion of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) for supporting youth Local Economic Development initiatives and projects;
- ✓ Government and social partners should promote economic integration of the youth, thus youths should have access to capital, land, labour and entrepreneurial skills;
- ✓ The youths should be involved in the consultations, formulations, implementation and evaluation of national policies and programmes;
- ✓ Government and its partners should commit to financing entrepreneurship, training, and skills development for young people using informal and formal channels of training;
- ✓ Decentralisation of youth employment initiatives that take into cognisance issues of gender, disability and other social exclusion issues;
- ✓ The government and other stakeholders should create a financing mechanism for youth in the areas of science, technology and ICT; and
- ✓ Pursuit of active labour market interventions to enhance the integrability of vulnerable and marginalised social groups and sectors (should be at the core of all employment initiatives for the youths).