



**Joining forces to end forced labour,
modern slavery, human trafficking and
child labour:**

**Sub regional Consultation for Western and Northern Africa
Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, 8-9 September 2016**

**Statement by Mr Aeneas C. Chuma
ILO Assistant Director-General
& Regional Director for Africa**

H.E. Ms. Dominique Ouattara, First Lady of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire and Chairperson of the National Committee to Combat Trafficking, Exploitation and Child Labour,

Hon. Moussa Dosso, Minister of Employment and Social Protection of Côte d'Ivoire,

Mr John Odah, Executive Secretary of Trade Unions of West Africa

Mr Kacou Diagou, President of the Federation of employers' organizations of West Africa (FOPAO), President of the CGECI

Colleagues from the United Nations Country Team

Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed a great honour and a rare privilege for me, on behalf of the International Labour Organization, to participate in the opening ceremony on the occasion of the first sub-regional consultation for West and North Africa on an important challenge of our time – ending forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labour.

I want to start sincerely by expressing our profound appreciation to the First Lady of Côte d'Ivoire, Madame Dominique Ouattara, and through

her, to the Government and People of the great and rising Republic of Côte d'Ivoire for hosting this consultation.

The fact that we are having this consultation in the city of Abidjan is evidence enough that Côte d'Ivoire has indeed returned to assume its historical and rightful place of vibrancy and leadership among the nations of our continent and indeed the world.

Let me also add that, as ILO Regional Director for Africa, I am particularly delighted to be here today and in being present here today, to signal to you all, that the Regional Office of the International Labour Organization has completed its return to its original home in Abidjan. In this respect I want express ILO and my own personal appreciation to my brother, Honorable Minister Dosso, and his colleagues in Government for supporting and facilitating the return of ILO structures to our original home in Abidjan. We are delighted to be back home in Abidjan and Côte d'Ivoire, where we belong.

Your Excellency

Distinguished Participants

We are gathered here today, from far and wide, and from various stakeholder groups, to consult and deliberate on a critical issue of our time: ending Forced Labour, Modern Slavery, Human Trafficking and Child Labour.

With an estimated 3.7 million African men, women and children still trapped in forced labour, and working under extreme coercion, largely in the informal economy, the African continent urgently needs practical and effective solutions to combat forced labour, including human trafficking and modern slavery. And with 1 child out of 5 engaged in the worst forms of child labour, we urgently need a clear roadmap to tackle this problem at all levels up to the community and household levels.

Distinguished Participants

It is important to recall that one year ago at the General Assembly in New York, Heads of State and Government of the world adopted a new generation of Sustainable Developments Goals (or SDGs) to replace the old Millennium Development Goals (or MDGs). Among the 17 goals adopted was Sustainable Development Goal 8, which aims at delivering decent and productive work to support an inclusive growth that reduces inequality and ends poverty.

But SDG 8 has several targets and one in particular, Target 8.7, focuses on forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labour – the subject of this consultation. Target 8.7 specifically calls for immediate and effective measures to end forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking by 2030 and to end child labour in all its forms by 2025.

The process leading to the formulation of these goals and targets has fostered an understanding that all parts and levels of society, international and national, needed to work together in new and innovative ways to achieve the ambitious and aspirational goals of the SDGs. Towards this end, a new global coalition of named Alliance 8.7 has emerged as a practical approach to accelerate the achievement of target 8.7 through a stronger global partnership for sustainable development, supplemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the implementation of the SDGs in all countries.

So to advance SDG 8.7, we can no longer do business as usual. We cannot enact the same policies or implement the same programmes and expect different results. SDG 8.7 calls for rethinking the way we work and engage across the board.

And this is why we are all here in Abidjan. This first sub regional consultation is an excellent opportunity to work out a common position for West and North Africa before the official launch of the SDG Alliance 8.7 in New York on 21 September 2016. The event in NY will bring together Heads of States and Government, High Level Representatives of global trade unions' and employers' organizations, Nobel laureates, activists and UN agencies. Its objective is to accelerate political and international support for the eradication of child labour, forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking, and to highlight the critical importance of the SDG 8.7.

In this context this Abidjan consultation for is timely and particularly important in advancing the agenda in the global fight to end forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labour.

This consultation is therefore not an isolated event. It is part of a larger effort, and we at the ILO are proud to be associated with this effort. We look forward to the outcome of your deliberations and to your ideas on how we can work together to end the scourge of forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labour

Your Excellency,

Honorable Minister

Distinguished Participants and Guests

I thank you for your kind attention.