

Greetings:

First Lady of Côte d'Ivoire, President of the National Committee to Combat Trafficking, Exploitation and Child Labour,

Mayor of Cocody,

ILO Assistant Director General and regional director for Africa,

Minister of employment and social protection of Côte d'Ivoire,

President of employers' organisation for West Africa

It is my honour to address this panel on behalf of the trade unions of Western and Northern Africa.

I would like to share with you our vision in relation to three areas:

1. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in general:

- trade unions through various processes have actively participated in its formulation and have supported its endorsement by the world leaders last September
- we welcome the Agenda addressing all the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental;
- trade unions believe that the ILO, based on standards and supervisory mechanisms from global through to the national level, should be fully integrated in the 2030 Agenda follow-up and review process
- trade unions are particularly committed to realising goals and targets to end poverty, foster decent work, ensure quality education, provide public services, infrastructure and social protection policies, reduce inequalities, champion women's participation in the work force as well as joining forces to end forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labour

2. TU preparatory workshop

Yesterday trade unions from Western and Northern Africa invited to participate in the consultation on the Alliance 8.7 held a preparatory meeting to discuss trade union policies and activities aimed at putting an end to child labour, forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking.

The conclusions of the meeting was that despite the progress made, especially in relation to the elimination of all forms of child labour, there are still challenges to be addressed especially when it comes to the implementation of action plans and enforcement of laws. We call on our governments to invest both human and financial resources, to ensure that we get more rapid and positive results in this regard. From examples coming from different countries we also see that progress is faster and results are sustainable in countries where the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining is respected; where trade unions and employers' organisations are strong and have the capacities to meaningfully participate in social dialogue. Social dialogue is a pillar to ensure ownership of policy processes at the national level and should be utilised and promoted wherever and whenever possible.

3. The Alliance 8.7

Target 8.7 of Goal 8 of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development calls all the states to "Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms"

The Agenda 2030 also encourages building partnerships to achieve its goals. Indeed joining forces of different actors could be seen as beneficial in terms of accumulation of resources and avoiding duplication of efforts. Such partnerships should be inclusive.

As the experience of the ILO in its almost 100 years of existence has amply shown, social partners have an important role to play whether through participation in development of national action plans and their implementation and monitoring or through participation in different global initiatives and

partnerships like the emerging Alliance 8.7. which is the topic for our discussion today and tomorrow.

Trade unions have always been engaged in the fight against child and forced labour. Strategic areas where trade unions have a natural disposition to make a difference to the global effort include using organising strategies and collective bargaining to tackle child and forced labour, participation in awareness raising and advocacy campaigns and outreaching to workers including those in the informal economy (and through them to their families and wider communities); helping states to identify child and forced labour, to name just a few of them. Trade unions as representative organisations of workers have their trust. These are some of what we can contribute to the Alliance.

Forced labour and child labour – these two basic human rights violations that constitute 2 of the 4 fundamental principles and rights at work are inseparable of the other two – the right to non-discrimination and equality of treatment and the right to organise and bargain collectively. This lies in the heart of the ILO values and should be taken on board by the Alliance and we want ILO to bring to it.

As organised labour, we call on our respective national governments to ratify as a matter of urgency the relevant ILO fundamental and governance Conventions. In addition urgent national tripartite action plans need to be developed for their implementation.

Roles in the Alliance need to be defined to fit the capacities and specialisations of different stakeholders. Social partners should be assisted in building their capacities to be able to contribute meaningfully towards achieving the goals of the Alliance.

We are looking forward towards the upcoming discussions on the nature of the Alliance 8.7 and would like to underline that trade unions of the countries present in this room today are committed to working hard to achieving target 8.7 including through the multi-stakeholder Alliance with the condition that the processes are transparent, coherent and inclusive so that no one is left behind.