



International Labour Organization  
Organisation internationale du Travail  
Organización Internacional del Trabajo

## **Preventing forced labour, human trafficking and slavery-like practices in Africa Regional Tripartite Conference**



### **FINAL COMMUNIQUÉ**

We, the participants of the tripartite conference on forced labour, human trafficking and slavery-like practices, convened in Lusaka, Zambia, on November 19-20, 2013, are united in our concerns about the continued use and existence of forced labour and related practices in Africa.

We recall the founding principles of the ILO that labour is not a commodity and that people should be free to choose productive employment.

We recall the universal acceptance of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work which are enshrined in the 1998 ILO Declaration.

We recall that the protection of these rights, including the freedom from forced labour, human trafficking and slavery are essential in achieving social justice for a fair globalization as set out in the 2008 ILO Declaration.

We call on the resolve of governments and social partners of Africa to abolish all forms of contemporary forced labour, human trafficking and slavery within the shortest possible time.

While most countries in the region have ratified relevant international instruments, in particular the ILO Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105), the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and the UN Palermo Protocol to suppress, prevent and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime, and while many governments have taken action to bring national laws in line with international standards, to design national policies and to set up institutions necessary to effectively implement these policies, we urge our governments to effectively enforce these laws and to implement relevant policies to end forced labour, human trafficking and slavery.

We express our concern about the estimated scope of forced labour which affects as many as 3.7 million women, men and children in Africa. We acknowledge that insufficient national data hampers effective policy making and measurement of progress. We therefore encourage our governments to mandate national bureaus of statistics and other relevant stakeholders to work with the ILO on the production of reliable forced labour statistics, including qualitative studies.

Policies against forced labour, human trafficking and slavery should also address the root causes of this scourge. Discrimination against certain groups, such as migrant workers, ethnic minorities, women and children, enhances the vulnerability to being exploited.

We call on ILO constituents and other stakeholders to strengthen efforts to promote full access to the labour market and to ensure equal pay for work of equal value.

We affirm our commitment to the Decent Work Agenda and urge governments to pursue its effective implementation.

We agree that poverty is as much a root cause as a consequence of forced labour. Policies against forced labour, human trafficking and slavery should be linked to comprehensive employment and education based measures that not only target people at risk of forced labour but that lift entire communities out of poverty. We further agree that labour mobility plays an important role to overcome the lack of livelihoods. Measures to prevent forced labour, human trafficking and slavery should enable people to migrate safely and to find productive and freely chosen employment.

The lack of enforcement of labour law in sectors where forced labour practices are most frequently reported is a major factor contributing to its continued use. In some countries, governance needs to be strengthened to ensure the effective abolition of forced labour, human trafficking and slavery. Stronger measures are required to ensure implementation of labour law to protect workers in all sectors, in particular in the informal economy and in sectors that are most susceptible to forced labour, human trafficking and slavery through reinforced capacity of labour inspection, organisation of workers and sensitization of employers. Those who aid abet and exact forced labour, human trafficking and slavery must be prosecuted swiftly.

We express our concern over the fact that many victims of forced labour, human trafficking and slavery are never identified and that identified victims face difficulties in claiming compensation and in receiving the support they need to resume their lives. Better coordination among governments, law enforcement agencies, social partners and civil society is required to strengthen prevention and protection measures.

We support the standard-setting process in view of the adoption of supplementary instruments to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), as it will provide guidance to governments on the systematic implementation of anti-forced labour measures and reinforce high level political commitment to the work of the ILO to combat forced labour, human trafficking and slavery.

Countries should also be encouraged to ratify the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No 189).

Acting on these proposals requires political will, dedication and strong partnerships at the national, regional and international levels, involving governments, workers' and employers' organisations, civil society, the media and other stakeholders. We affirm our commitment to put these proposals into action and to make the elimination of forced labour, human trafficking and slavery a reality in Africa.

*Adopted in Lusaka, Zambia, on 20 November 2013*